SINK OR SWIM

ILLUSTRATED

HORATIO ALGER JR.

Salinas 188[illegible]

Dec 24

from papa and mam

to May & Nellie

we wish you a

very merry Christmas

and a happy

New year

SINK OR SWIM;

OR,

HARRY RAYMOND'S RESOLVE.

BY

HORATIO ALGER, Jr.,

AUTHOR OF "RAGGED DICK," "FAME AND FORTUNE," "MARK, THE MATCH BOY," "ROUGH AND READY," "BEN, THE LUGGAGE BOY," "RUFUS AND ROSE," "CAMPAIGN SERIES," "LUCK AND PLUCK SERIES," ETC.

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(*Fourth volume in preparation.*)

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To

MY MOTHER,

THIS VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

"SINK OR SWIM" is the second volume of the "LUCK AND PLUCK SERIES," and, like its predecessor, is designed to illustrate the truth that a manly spirit is better than the gifts of fortune.

It does not fall to the lot of many boys to meet with such adventures or to encounter such trials as befell the young hero of this story; but it will be of service to all, to adopt Harry Raymond's motto. If there are any of my young readers who are disposed to envy Harry's final good fortune, let them remember that the best way to strive for success is to deserve it; and

then, if it does not come, there will at least be a consciousness of well-doing, which in itself is a rich reward.

NEW YORK, November 1, 1870.

SINK OR SWIM;

OR,

HARRY RAYMOND'S RESOLVE.

CHAPTER I.

THE VERNON HIGH SCHOOL.

"SINK or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and my heart to this vote."

These words were declaimed in a clear, ringing voice from the platform of the Vernon High School. The speaker was a boy of fifteen, well-knit, and vigorous, with a frank, manly expression, and a prepossessing face. His dark chestnut hair waved slightly above a high, intellectual brow, and his attitude, as he faced his school-mates, was one of ease and unconscious grace. His eye flashed as he declaimed with appropriate emphasis the patriotic extract which commences in the well-known words quoted above.

He had learned the orator's secret, — to be in earnest, — and he carried his audience with him. When, at the conclusion of his declamation, he bowed and walked to his desk, the boys broke into spontaneous applause. Though this was contrary to the rules of the school, Reuben Tower, A. M., the principal, uttered no reprimand. He had himself been pleased with the declamation, and sympathized to some extent with the scholars.

"Very well indeed, Master Raymond! You speak as if you felt it," he said.

Harry Raymond looked gratified at this double commendation. The applause of his school-mates pleased him, for he was by no means indifferent to their good opinion, which he tried on all occasions to deserve. He was no less pleased with Mr. Tower's praise, for he had a high respect for his ability, and that praise was never lightly bestowed.

I have spoken of Harry's good appearance. I am obliged to confess that his dress had nothing to do with this. In fact, his jacket and pants were of very coarse texture, and by no means elegant in fit. Besides this, they appeared, though neat, to have seen

considerable service, and there was a patch on one knee, — very small, indeed, but still a patch. In fact, I may as well state at the outset, that Harry was the son of a house-carpenter, — an industrious and intelligent man, but still of limited income, and obliged to economize strictly in order to lay aside, as he made it a point to do, a hundred dollars a year, as a provision for the future.

The applause which followed our hero's declamation was almost unanimous. I say *almost*, for there were two boys who did not join in it. One of these was James Turner, a boy about Harry's age, but more slightly made. He was the son of Squire Turner, the wealthiest man in Vernon, and his dress afforded quite a contrast to the ill-fitting garments of our young hero. The village tailor's skill had not been deemed sufficient, but James had accompanied his father to New York, where his measure had been left with a Broadway tailor, who had made up the suit and sent it to Vernon by express. The cloth was very fine, and there was a style and neatness of fit about the clothes of which James felt very proud. He regarded his companions with a supercilious air

as if convinced of his own immeasurable superiority, in dress at least.

James Turner did not participate in the applause called forth by Harry Raymond's declamation. On the contrary, he sat with an unpleasant sneer on his lips, and cast a glance of scorn at the patch, which his quick eye had detected in our hero's pants.

There was another boy, sitting next to James, who also refrained from joining in the applause. This was Tom Barton, a friend and hanger-on of James Turner, who, by persistent flattery, earned the privilege of being treated with half-contemptuous familiarity and condescension by the young aristocrat. He knew that James did not like Harry Raymond, and the sneer which he saw on the lips of his patron gave him the cue. He attempted to imitate it, and gaze scornfully at the young orator in his momentary triumph.

"James Turner!" called out the principal.

James Turner rose from his seat, and walked to the platform, which he ascended, greeting the audience with a stiff and consequential bow, and an air which

might be interpreted to mean, "Boys, you will now have the privilege of hearing *me* speak."

James had selected a good piece, — Patrick Henry's well-known appeal to arms, familiar to every school-boy, commencing, "I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience."

It is a fine piece of oratory, lofty in tone and sentiment, and should be spoken with dignified earnestness. James Turner's voice, which was shrill, was scarcely calculated to do justice to it. Still it would not have called out any demonstration from the young auditory, but for one or two peculiar ideas on the part of James, as to the proper way of speaking it. When he came to the clause, "We have prostrated ourselves before the throne," he suited the action to the word, and sank upon his knees. But, afraid of soiling his pantaloons, he first spread out his silk handkerchief on the platform, and this spoiled whatever effect the action might otherwise have had. There was a general titter, which the young aristocrat saw with anger. At the end of the

sentence, he rose from his knees, and, with a general scowl at the boys, kept on with his declamation.

But a more serious *contretemps* awaited him. A little further on, the orator says, "We have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne." Here again, James, with a striking lack of judgment, thought it would heighten the effect to suit the action to the word. Acccordingly, he prepared to kick out with his right foot. Unfortunately, he was so provoked with his school-mates, for their lack of appreciation of the other point he had made, that he executed the manœuvre, if it may properly be so called, with a spiteful emphasis which was too much for his equilibrium. He lost his balance, and fell forward in a ludicrous manner, and rolled over on the floor of the school-room.

It could not be expected that fifty school-boys could restrain their merriment under such trying circumstances. There was a wild burst of laughter, in which, after an ineffectual attempt to resist the infection, Mr. Tower himself was compelled to join. Boys laughed till the tears came into their eyes, and the merriment was only increased when James

Turner rose to his feet, and with an air of offended majesty marched indignantly to his seat, darting a look of withering scorn, as he meant it to be, at his youthful audience.

The laughter recommenced, and became almost hysteric. The principal, however, quickly recovered himself, and said: —

"Boys, that will do. Turner, you must excuse the boys for a little good-natured merriment at your expense. I think your conception of the gestures proper to use with your piece is not quite correct. However, that is a point on which the most experienced speakers are apt to make mistakes; not only boys, but men. Your intention was good, though the effect was injured by circumstances."

These remarks ought to have appeased the offended orator, but he evidently did not mean to be appeased so readily. His feeling of mortification was swallowed up in a greater feeling of anger and irritation at the presumption of his school-mates, in daring to laugh at him, the son of the richest man in Vernon. He felt that he was entitled, rather, to be treated with respect and deference. So he sat sullenly through

the remainder of the speaking, with an ill-tempered scowl upon his features.

When the speaking was over, Mr. Tower rose and said: —

"Boys, you are aware that at the commencement of the term I offered a prize to the boy who, in your own judgment, should be pronounced to have succeeded best in declamation, taking into consideration the whole term. As this is the last time we shall declaim before vacation, I will call for the vote now. I shall distribute small slips of paper among you, and I will ask each boy to inscribe upon his slip the name of that one who, in his opinion, deserves the prize. We will afterwards count the votes."

Slips of paper were accordingly distributed, and the boys were soon busy in recording their votes.

"Sheffield, you may collect the votes," said Mr. Tower.

The boy referred to passed among the desks with his hat, and the slips of paper were deposited therein. These were handed to the teacher, who forthwith proceeded to count them.

The count over, he rapped on his desk.

"Boys," he said, "I will announce the vote. Votes cast, fifty. Of those Walter Sheffield has one; James Turner, two; and the remainder, forty-seven in number, are for Harry Raymond, to whom I have great pleasure in awarding the prize, of which he has been pronounced worthy by the nearly unanimous vote of his school-mates. Raymond, you will come forward."

Harry Raymond advanced towards the teacher's desk, amid the loud applause of his companions.

Mr. Tower placed in his hands a handsomely bound volume, consisting of selections from the best efforts of orators, ancient and modern, saying: —

"I have great pleasure in giving you this volume, Raymond, for my own judgment approves the selection of your school-fellows. I trust you will be able to express in your life, as you have so appropriately done upon the platform, the lofty and elevated sentiments of our best orators."

There was a flush of gratification upon our hero's cheek, as he received the book with a respectful bow, and returned to his seat amid the renewed applause of his fellow-pupils.

CHAPTER II.

SOUR GRAPES.

HARRY RAYMOND lived in a small house, just off the main street, fronting on a narrow road or lane. The building lot, consisting of an acre of land, his father had bought three years before for one hundred and fifty dollars. After purchasing and paying for it cash down, he found that he had but one hundred dollars left towards the house which he wanted to build. Under these circumstances he went to Squire Turner, who was the moneyed man of the village, and asked for a loan. Knowing that his money would be safe, the squire agreed to furnish him what money he might need towards the house, taking a mortgage upon it when it was completed.

Mr. Raymond, therefore, at once commenced building. His house cost a thousand dollars, of which Squire Turner furnished him seven hundred, the balance being made up of his own labor and cash

in hand. So, when all was done, he regarded himself as worth a property of twelve hundred dollars, subject to a mortgage of seven hundred. During the three years that had since elapsed he had managed, besides paying interest, to pay up three hundred dollars of the mortgage, leaving only four hundred due. This had not been accomplished without some economy; but his wife and Harry had cheerfully acquiesced in this, being anxious for the time to come when they might be clear owners of the little house.

The house contained six rooms, and stood about fifty feet back from the street. The land in the rear made an excellent garden, supplying them with all the vegetables of which they had need.

Besides Harry, there was his sister Katy, a little girl of ten, sweet and winning in her ways, to whom he was warmly attached.

Mr. Raymond had kept Harry steadily at school, feeling that a good education would be of far more value to him in after life than the small amount he might earn if kept at work. Harry had justified this determination, having acquitted himself on all occasions most creditably in all the studies which he

pursued. Out of school he found time to work in the garden, and assist in various ways, by sawing and splitting what wood was required for family use, so that his father, on returning from his day's labor was not under the necessity of fatiguing himself by extra work.

We will now return to the Vernon High School.

When school was dismissed, Harry Raymond was surrounded by his friends, eager to congratulate him on his success.

"I congratulate you, Harry," said Walter Sheffield, good-naturedly, "which is doing the handsome thing, considering that I was your rival. You only had forty-six more votes than I. That's what I call a close shave."

"You voted for yourself, didn't you, Sheffield?" said Will Pomeroy.

"I'm not going to expose myself, if I did," said Walter.

"Shouldn't wonder if Turner voted for himself," said one of the boys, in a low voice.

"But he had two votes."

"Oh, Tom Barton cast the other vote, of course,"

said Will Pomeroy, rather contemptuously. "He fawns upon Turner just because he's rich. I wish him joy of his friend."

"Say, Turner, did you vote for yourself?" called out one of the boys.

"None of your business!" said James Turner, sharply.

He stood a little on one side with his crony, Tom Barton, surveying the scene with an ill-tempered scowl. It was very disagreeable to him to see Harry Raymond's triumph. In fact, he hated our hero, for no good reason except that Harry was his acknowledged superior in acquirements, always standing higher in his classes, and received from his schoolmates a degree of respect and deference which James Turner with all his money could not buy.

"Why don't you come and congratulate Raymond on his prize?"

"I'd rather congratulate him on his pantaloons," said James, with a sneer.

"What's the matter with them?" demanded Will Pomeroy, supposing at first that Harry might have soiled them in some way.

"Patches seem to be in fashion," said James, with another sneer.

Of course the attention of all the boys was attracted to Harry's knee, and the patch, which had hitherto escaped observation, was discovered.

Harry Raymond's cheek flushed, for he saw that an insult was intended, but he did not at once speak.

"For shame, Turner!" said Will Pomeroy, indignantly, and it was evident that the other boys sympathized with him in his feeling.

"What should I be ashamed of?" retorted Turner.

"For your meanness in twitting Harry with the patch."

"I didn't; I only mentioned it."

"You are envious because he got the prize."

"What do I care for the trumpery prize? It didn't cost more than a dollar and a half. My father will buy me a dozen such books, if I want them."

"Perhaps he will; but for all that you'd have taken it quick enough if you could have got it. It isn't the value of the book, it's what it means."

"What does it mean?"

"That Harry Raymond is the best speaker in the Vernon High School."

"Boys," said Harry, quietly, "don't trouble yourselves to defend me. I don't care what James Turner says. Perhaps the book didn't cost more than a dollar and a half, but it was given me by your votes, and that makes it worth more to me than if it cost a hundred dollars. I haven't had a chance to say it before, but I am grateful to you for your kindness in awarding it to me, and I shall always treasure it for that reason."

"Three cheers for Harry Raymond!" called out Walter Sheffield, waving his arm, and giving the signal.

The three cheers were given with a will, and Harry looked gratified at this proof of the regard in which he was held.

"Now three groans for James Turner!" said another.

"No, boys," said Harry, promptly; "don't do that."

"But he insulted you."

"I suppose you mean about the patch. But never

mind about that. You all know that my father is a poor man, and can't afford to buy me expensive clothes. If I get my clothes torn, I can't afford to throw them aside. I don't like patches any better than anybody, but till I get richer I shall wear them."

Harry spoke so manfully, that the boys heartily sympathized with him. It might have been supposed that James Turner would have been convinced of his meanness, and ashamed of it; but he was essentially a mean boy, and it may be added that a part of his meanness came to him from his father, who, though a rich man, was sordid and covetous, and never known to do a generous action. So James now could not refrain from a parting sneer.

"If Raymond wears patches because he is poor," he said, "I'll give him a pair of pants that I've got through wearing, any time when he'll come up to the house."

"You needn't trouble yourself," said Harry, angry at the insult. "When I want your cast-off clothes I'll let you know. I'll go in rags first."

"Just as you choose," said James, sneering.

"There's no accounting for tastes. Come along, Barton."

The two boys walked away, not much regretted by those they left behind. If they had heard the remarks made about them after their departure, neither would have felt particularly complimented.

"The beggarly upstart!" said James to his companion. "He puts on airs enough for a pauper."

"So he does," said Barton. "He can't speak half as well as you. But Mr. Tower's prejudiced."

"I don't care for his miserable prizes," said James. "They're not worth thinking of."

It was only another illustration of the well-known fable of the fox and the grapes.

CHAPTER III.

A SUDDEN BLOW.

HARRY RAYMOND, after receiving the congratulations of his school-mates, took his way homeward. He was not obliged to travel by the road, as there was a short cut across the field.

At the end of ten minutes he threw open the door, and went into the house. His mother was ironing, and Katy sat near by, reading a book.

"See what I've got, mother," said Harry, holding up his prize.

"What is it, Harry?"

"It's the prize for declamation. The boys took a vote, and it was awarded to me by forty-seven votes out of fifty."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Mrs. Raymond, and her face wore a proud look, as she glanced at the bright and animated face of her son.

"Who were the three boys that didn't vote for you?" asked Katy.

"I was one of them," said Harry, smiling.

"Who did you vote for?"

"For Walter Sheffield."

"Is he a good speaker?"

"Yes."

"But he isn't as good as you are."

"That isn't for me to say."

"Who got the other two votes?"

"James Turner."

"He's an awful disagreeable boy," said Katy. "He puts on all sorts of airs just because his father is rich. I wish father was as rich as Squire Turner."

"Perhaps you'd like to have him for a father."

"No, I shouldn't," said Katy, quickly. "He's just as bad for a man, as James is for a boy."

"So, you see, money isn't everything," said her mother.

There was a deeper meaning in these words than her children knew. There was one passage in her early life, known only to herself and her husband, with which the rich Squire Turner was connected.

As a girl, Mrs. Raymond had been very handsome, and even now, at the age of thirty-six, she retained much of her good looks. It was not generally known that Squire Turner had been an aspirant for her hand. But though he was even then rich, and could have given her an attractive home — so far as money can make a home attractive — she quietly rejected his suit, and accepted Mr. Raymond, a journeyman carpenter, with less than a hundred dollars.

This rejection Squire Turner never forgot nor forgave. He was not a forgiving man, and his resentment was bitter, though he did not choose to show it publicly. Indeed, he treated Mr. and Mrs. Raymond, to all appearance, as though nothing had happened; but none the less he nursed his anger, and waited patiently for an opportunity to repay, by some grievous injury, the wrong which he fancied he had suffered. About the same time with Mr. Raymond, Squire Turner also married a Miss Ellis, a sharp-tempered spinster from a neighboring town, whose only redeeming point was the possession of ten thousand dollars in her own right. Her husband cared nothing for her, but only for her money, and

the marriage was far from being a happy one. Domestic dissension, and almost continual wrangling, were what James had witnessed from his babyhood up to the time of his mother's death, a year previous; and perhaps it is not surprising that the son of such parents should have been unpopular, and possessed of disagreeable traits.

Yet Mr. Raymond had applied to Squire Turner for money to assist him in building his house. The squire had two objects in granting this request. First, the security was ample, and the investment a good one; and, secondly, a debtor is always to some extent in the power of his creditor. Squire Turner was by no means averse to establishing this power over the husband of the woman who had rejected his suit. The time might come when he could make a use of it.

"What piece did you speak to-day, Harry?" asked his mother.

"The supposed speech of John Adams. You remember how it begins: 'Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and my heart to this vote.'"

"Yes, I remember it."

"I have been thinking, mother," continued Harry, "that I shall take my motto from it."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean this: Sink or swim, I am going to do my duty, and try to succeed in life. I am not going to be frightened by obstacles, but am going to push on as well as I can."

"It's a good motto, Harry. I hope you'll have strength to adhere to it."

"I think I'll go out and split a little wood, now, mother."

"I wish you would. I always burn a good deal on ironing days."

"I think I'll split up enough to last two or three days. I have more time Wednesdays than Mondays."

On Wednesday the only afternoon exercise was declamation, so that, instead of closing at four, the school was usually out, as to-day, at half-past two. At half-past five Harry re-entered the house.

"Isn't supper ready, mother?" he asked. "I'm as hungry as a bear."

"Yes, Harry, it is ready; but your father has not got home yet. I have been waiting for him."

"Where is he at work?"

"On Doctor Lamson's house, just across the railroad. The doctor is in a hurry to get it finished as soon as possible, and perhaps the carpenters are working extra hours."

"Did father say anything about it before he went away this morning?"

"No, he didn't mention any intention of stopping. But he stopped on Monday a little over time, and perhaps he has done so to-night."

"Well, I hope he'll return soon, for I feel uncommonly hungry."

"If your father isn't here by six, we'll sit down. I can keep the tea hot for him."

Not a shadow of apprehension was in Mrs. Raymond's mind as she spoke, but already a heavy calamity had fallen upon her, of which she was unconscious.

Six o'clock came, and Mr. Raymond had not returned.

"I think you had better sit down to tea, children,"

said their mother. "I am not very hungry, and I will wait for your father."

They sat down accordingly, and Harry made a hearty supper, quite justifying the report he had given of his appetite.

Another hour passed away.

It was now seven o'clock, and Mr. Raymond was still absent.

"I wonder your father does not come," said Mrs. Raymond, with a little vague restlessness, which had not yet been converted into anxiety. "He has not often been so late as this, without telling me beforehand that he meant to stay away."

"I think I will go out and meet him," said Harry.

To this Mrs. Raymond made no objection, feeling, on the whole, rather relieved by the proposal of her son.

She set the tea once more on the stove, and the bread and pie were also placed on the hearth of the stove to keep warm.

"Your father must be hungry," she said to Katy, "as it is so late."

Harry went out of the gate, and walked slowly up

the road in the direction of his father's probable return. He strained his eyes to see through the gathering twilight, but could see nothing of his father. Rather surprised at this, he kept on, until he happened to meet in the street Hiram Payson, who he knew had also been employed on Doctor Lamson's house.

"Good-evening, Mr. Payson," he said.

"Good-evening, Harry; where are you going? To the store?"

"No; I thought I would come out and see if I could meet my father."

"Meet your father? Why, where has he gone?"

"He hasn't got home from work yet. Did you start before him?"

"No; he started before me."

"He did!" exclaimed Harry, in surprise. "What time was that?"

"About five o'clock. I know it was not later than that."

"Where can he be?"

"Haven't you seen anything of him?"

"No. Did he say anything about going anywhere before he returned home?"

"No."

"Where can he be?" asked Harry, again; and this time there was anxiety in his tone.

"I'll tell you what, Harry," said Hiram Payson, "if you are going to look for him, I'll join you."

"Thank you, Mr. Payson. I wish you would."

The two pushed on in the direction of Doctor Lamson's new house. It was probably about a mile distant in all, the railroad being three-quarters of the way. They reached the railroad, and, as if by mutual consent, paused and looked about them.

"Your father sometimes walks on the railroad a little distance, as far as Carter's pasture. Perhaps we had better take that way."

Harry assented. There was a scared look on his face, and a fear which he did not dare to define to himself.

It was realized all too soon. About fifty rods distant, they came upon the mangled remains of his father, lying stretched across the track. His hearing had been affected by a fever, which he had three

years previous. It was evident, that as he was walking on the track, the train sweeping round a curve had come upon him unawares, and his life was the forfeit. Harry uttered one shriek of horror, and sank down beside his father's body, now cold in death.

CHAPTER IV.

AFTER THE FUNERAL.

The grief of Mrs. Raymond and her two children, for the death of the husband and father, was very sharp and poignant. Had he died at home of some lingering illness, their minds would have been prepared in some measure for the stroke. But, cut off as he was in an instant, the blow fell upon them very heavily.

On the third day after the body was found, the funeral took place. Harry attended as chief mourner, for his mother was compelled to remain at home on account of illness. But when the funeral was over other cares forced themselves upon their attention. It is only the rich who can afford to give themselves up unreservedly to the luxury of grief. The poor must rouse themselves to battle for their bread. In Mr. Raymond's death his family had not only lost an affectionate husband and father, but the one upon

whom they had leaned for support. How they were to live in future was a question which demanded their earliest consideration.

They were gathered in the little sitting-room one evening about a week after Mr. Raymond's death. Mrs. Raymond was looking sad and pale, while Harry's face was sober and earnest. He already began to realize that his father's cares and responsibilities had fallen on his young shoulders, and that it was his duty to take that father's place as well as he should be able.

"It is time, mother," he said, "that we began to talk about our future plans."

"I am sure I don't know what we shall do," said his mother, sighing, for to her the future looked formidable.

But Harry was young, healthy, and sanguine, and his spirits were lighter.

"Whatever we do, mother," he said, "we won't despond. There are a great many ways of getting a living, and I know that we shall get along somehow."

"I don't know," said Mrs. Raymond, dubiously.

"Do you remember that piece I spoke the other day?"

"The one you got the prize for, Harry?" said his sister.

"It wasn't for that only, but for speaking the whole term. The piece began with 'Sink or Swim;' and I told you then that I meant to take that for my motto."

"What do you mean, Harry?"

"I mean this, mother," said Harry, with energy, "that, sink or swim, I am going to do my best; and if I do that, I think it'll be swim and not sink."

"But you are so young, Harry," said his mother, not very hopefully.

"I am fifteen," said Harry, drawing himself up. "I am well and strong, and I can work."

"I don't know what you can find to do."

"Oh, there are plenty of things," said Harry, cheerfully, though rather vaguely It would, perhaps; have puzzled him to enumerate the plenty of things; but he was hopeful and confident, and that was in his favor.

"Do you think you could build houses, Harry?" asked Katy.

"None that would be worth living in," he said, smiling. "I don't mean to be a carpenter. It would take too long to learn, and the pay is never very large. But the first thing to do, mother, is to see how we stand."

"There's this house. That is all we have, and Squire Turner holds a mortgage on that."

"The mortgage is seven hundred dollars. How much has been paid on it?"

"Three hundred dollars."

"Then we own it all except four hundred dollars. It is worth fully twelve hundred dollars, so that we are worth at least eight hundred dollars."

"That won't last very long," said Mrs. Raymond.

"Not if we spend it; but I hope we shan't have to do that. Still it gives us something to fall back upon, in case I don't succeed very well at first. Then there is the furniture; that must be worth at least two hundred dollars."

"It cost considerably more."

"Never mind, we will call it two hundred dollars.

You see," he added, cheerfully, "we have got up to a thousand already. Now, mother, have you got any money in the house?"

"About twenty-five dollars."

"That is not much, but it is something. I suppose that is all."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Well, it isn't so bad as it might be. Think of those who are left wholly destitute, with starvation staring them in the face. When you think of that, we are quite rich in comparison."

"I might have had something to help along," said Mrs. Raymond, "but my father lost what little property we had before he died, and left nothing at all."

"Wasn't he a soldier in the war of 1812?" inquired Harry.

"Yes, he served for over a year."

"Didn't he get any pension, or anything else from government?"

"No, he got no pension. He got a grant of land — eighty acres, I believe — somewhere out in Wisconsin."

"What did he do with the land?"

"He never did anything. Land was only a dollar and a quarter an acre, and nobody would give him that. An agent offered him twenty-five dollars for his grant, but he would not take it. Then he put away the paper, and never did anything more about it."

"Have you got the paper now, mother?" asked Harry, interested.

"Yes, I believe so. I think I have it somewhere in my bureau."

"If it wouldn't be too much trouble I would like to see it. Can't I find it?"

"No, I will go for it."

Mrs. Raymond went upstairs, and shortly returned with a paper yellow with age, setting forth that Henry Mann, in consideration of services rendered to the government, was entitled to a quarter section of land, the location of which was specified.

"A quarter section!" said Harry. "That's a hundred and sixty acres, — more than you thought."

"Is it?" said Mrs. Raymond, listlessly. "I suppose it doesn't make much difference now which

it is. After so long a time there is no chance of getting it, and I suppose it wouldn't be worth much."

"I don't know about that," said Harry. "At any rate it's worth looking into. Shall I keep the paper?"

"Yes, if you wish."

"I will go round to-morrow, and see Squire Turner, and perhaps he can give me some information about it. But we haven't talked about our plans yet."

"I have thought of nothing."

"But I have. I will tell you about it, and see what you think. First, I thought of hiring some land, and turning farmer; but that's hard work, and requires more knowledge than I have got. Besides, I don't believe I could earn much."

"No; I don't think you could earn much that way."

"Then I thought I might go to the city, and get a small stock of goods, and go round peddling. Or, perhaps, I might get the agency for some popular article, and travel about with it."

"I am afraid it would be a great undertaking. Besides, you have no money to invest."

"That's true; but I could raise some. Squire Turner might advance me one hundred dollars, and increase the mortgage to that amount. A hundred dollars, or even less, would buy all the goods I should want at one time. That would be my capital in trade. As soon as I made money enough, I would pay it back, and then we should be as well off as we are now."

"I don't know what to think," said Mrs. Raymond, sighing. "I never had any head for business. I always left those things to your father."

"But you will consent to my asking such a loan?"

"Yes; if you really think it will do any good."

"I do. Remember my motto, mother, 'Sink or swim!' I've made up my mind to swim."

Thus ended the conference. Harry saw that it was as his mother said, — she had no head for business. He must form his own plans, and carry them through without assistance.

CHAPTER V.

SQUIRE TURNER.

Before doing anything else, Harry determined to consult some one about the land warrant. It might be worth nothing, or very little; but in their present circumstances they could not afford to give up even a little.

As he had suggested in his conversation with his mother, he decided to call on Squire Turner and ask his advice. He did not particularly like the squire, who was not popular in the neighborhood; but still he had the reputation of being well acquainted with matters of business, and, though not a regular lawyer, was accustomed to draw up deeds, and conveyances, and wills, and, in fact, supplied the place of a lawyer so far as his neighbors were concerned. There was no one in the village so likely as the squire to advise him correctly about the land warrant. So Harry put on his cap the next morning, and, with the document

in his breast-pocket, set out on his way to Squire Turner's residence.

It was a large, square dwelling-house, setting back some distance from the road. There were two gates, at the right and left hand, and a semicircular driveway, extending from one to the other, passed the front door.

It was half-past eight o'clock, and James Turner was standing on the front steps with his books under his arm. He had just come out, and was about to start for school. James surveyed Harry's approach with some curiosity.

"Halloo!" said he; "what do you want?"

This was not a very civil or cordial greeting, and Harry did not feel compelled to satisfy his curiosity.

"My business is not with you," he said; "it is with your father."

"I suppose you've come for a job," said James, coarsely. "I suppose you'll be awful poor."

"I don't know about that," said Harry, coolly. "I guess I shall be able to make a living."

"Maybe my father'll hire you to saw wood."

"Thank you; but that isn't the business I am thinking of following."

"Perhaps you are going to be a merchant," sneered James.

"Very likely I may be some time."

Harry was not much troubled by the rudeness of James; for he cared nothing for him or his good opinion. James was a little nettled to find that his taunts rebounded so harmlessly, and this led him to one parting shot.

Harry had ascended the front steps, and was about to ring the bell, when James said, "You needn't ring. You can go round to the back door."

"Is that where you go in?" asked Harry.

"No."

"Then, if you use the front door, I shall," and Harry rang a peal a little louder than he would have otherwise done.

James muttered something about his not knowing his place; but before the door was opened marched off for school.

The door was speedily opened by a servant.

"Is Squire Turner in?" asked Harry.

"Yes, he is. Won't you come in?"

Harry entered, and passed into a room on the right, which the squire generally used as a sitting-room. It was provided with a desk, studded with pigeon-holes, most of which were filled with papers. Here it was that the amateur lawyer received business calls, and transacted such business as came to his hands.

He looked round as Harry entered.

Squire Turner, whom I may as well describe here, was a tall man, with iron-gray hair, and a slight stoop in the shoulders. His face, which was rather harsh, began to show wrinkles. It was not, on the whole, a very pleasing or encouraging aspect; but Harry Raymond, who was used to the squire's looks, did not waste much thought upon this. It was his nature to go directly to the point.

"Did you want to see me?" asked the squire, adjusting his spectacles, and looking at our hero.

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"I'm rather busy now. Be as quick as you can."

"My father's death," said Harry, his lip quivering a little as he said it, "makes it necessary for me to

form some plans about getting along. I was reckoning up yesterday how much we had to start with, when my mother showed me a paper which may be worth something. Probably you will know. So I have brought it along to show you."

"Where is it?" asked Squire Turner.

Harry drew it out from his pocket, and handed it to the squire.

"I see it's a land warrant in favor of your grandfather," he said, after a little examination.

"Yes, sir."

"Given in return for his services in the war of 1812."

"Yes, sir. Is it worth anything?"

"Didn't he ever take up the land?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"I don't know, sir; except that Wisconsin was a good ways off, and I believe he had some property at that time, so that he did not need it. Mother says he was offered twenty-five dollars by an agent, but wouldn't accept it. After that, he appears to have put it away in his drawer, and forgotten it."

"Humph!" said the squire, reflectively, running his eyes over the document.

"Do you think I can get anything for it?" asked Harry.

"I am not prepared to say, positively," said the squire, slowly. "My impression is, that, after this length of time, it would be impossible to get anything for it."

"I was afraid that might be the case," said Harry. "Is there any way of finding out about it?"

"If you'll leave it with me, I will take steps to ascertain," said Squire Turner.

"Thank you, sir. If we get anything for it, we shall, of course, be willing to pay you for your trouble."

Most men would at once have assured Harry that no payment would be necessary; but Squire Turner was never known to refuse a fee, — he was too fond of money for that, — nor was it his intention to do so now. He accordingly answered, "Well, I will see about it. It may take some time."

"There was something else I wished to speak to you about," said Harry.

"Proceed."

"You hold a mortgage upon our place."

"Well?"

"It is now reduced to four hundred dollars by payments made by my father."

"Do you wish to pay the remainder?"

"No, sir; I am not able to. What I want is, to get another hundred dollars from you on the same security, making it five hundred dollars instead of four."

"What do you want with the money?"

"I have been thinking that I might get a stock of goods in the city, and go about selling them. I have got to do something, and I think I might make money that way."

"I couldn't let *you* have the money," said the squire.

"No, sir, I suppose not. But mother is willing, as she will tell you herself."

"I don't know but I can do it," said the squire, after a little pause. "Mind, I don't give any advice as to the plan you have in view. You may make it

pay, and you may not. Perhaps it would be better to get something to do about here."

"There isn't much chance in Vernon," answered Harry; "and there are plenty to do what little work there is."

"Well, that's your affair. About the money, I will consider the matter, and if you will come round to-morrow, I will let you know what I have decided."

"Thank you, sir."

"And about the land warrant, I will write out to a lawyer I know in Milwaukie, and ask his opinion. When his answer comes, I will let you know."

"Thank you, sir," said Harry; and, his business being at an end, he took his cap, and with a bow left the room.

On the whole, he was better pleased with the result of the interview than he anticipated. Squire Turner had not been very cordial or sympathetic, it is true, but he seemed disposed to grant the request which he had made; and, though Harry did not like him, he had a very good opinion of his business abilities.

"If we can only get a hundred dollars or so for the land warrant," he said to himself, "it will be a great help."

CHAPTER VI.

HARRY OBTAINS A PLACE.

On the way back from Squire Turner's, Harry stepped into the village store, as he had one or two small articles to purchase for his mother. This store was kept by Jonas Porter, a man over fifty, in rather poor health. On this account he was obliged to depend considerably upon two young men, whom he employed as assistants. One of them, John Gaylord, was twenty-five years of age, and an efficient salesman. The other, Alfred Harper, was about eighteen, and of course less experienced and valuable. The last was employed partly in driving the store wagon with goods to different parts of the village.

Harry entered the store, and, going up to the counter, said to the proprietor, who was standing behind, "Mr. Porter, I want two pounds of brown sugar."

"How is your mother?" asked the store-keeper.

"Not very well," answered Harry.

"No, I suppose not. Your father's death must be a great blow to her."

"Yes, sir. It is to all of us."

"I hope she will soon be feeling better. Health is a blessing we don't appreciate till we lose it. I have not been feeling very well, lately. In fact, I am not fit to be in the store."

"Where is Alfred Harper? I have not seen him for a day or two."

"He has been taken sick, and has gone home. He may be sick some weeks. It is unlucky just now, for I am not fit to be in the store. I wish I could get somebody to take his place for a few weeks."

Here an idea struck Harry. He was not as old as Alfred Harper, but he was strong, and he thought he might be able to do his work. He decided to suggest it to the storekeeper

"If you thought I would do," he said, "I should be glad to come into the store. I have got to go to work now."

"I am afraid you are too young," said Mr. Porter, doubtfully. "How old are you?"

"Fifteen, sir."

"That is young."

"Yes, sir; but I am pretty stout and strong of my age."

"You look so. Can you drive a horse?"

"Oh, yes, sir I have done that a good many times."

"I don't know," said the store-keeper, hesitating a little. "You couldn't do as much as Alfred; still, you could help a good deal. I have always heard good accounts of you. Mr. Gaylord, how will it do to engage Harry Raymond a few weeks while Alfred is away?"

"I think it would be a good plan, sir," said John Gaylord, who was familiar with Harry's good reputation, and had a very favorable opinion of him. "It would lighten your labors a good deal."

"Very true; and I am really not able to be in the store. Well, Harry," he proceeded, "I guess you may come."

"When shall I come?"

"The sooner the better."

"Then I'll come this afternoon," said Harry, promptly. "I want to go home and split up a little wood for mother, enough to last her."

"Very well. About the pay, I will give you six dollars a week."

Six dollars a week! This seemed to Harry a large sum. His father had only been paid two dollars per day, and therefore received but twice as much. He had hoped, to be sure, to earn more as a peddler; but then his expenses would be large, and, after all, he might fail, for it was but an experiment. Here there was no risk, but a certain weekly income. Besides, — and this was an important consideration, — it would enable him to continue at home, and he knew that just at this time his mother and little Katy would feel his absence more than at any other time.

Good news always quickens the step. Harry entered the house briskly, and placed the parcels he had brought from the store upon the table.

"Here are the sugar and butter, mother," he said. "Now I'll go out and split you some wood, for I've got to go to work this afternoon."

"What kind of work?" asked Mrs. Raymond, looking up.

"Alfred Harper is sick, and so is Mr. Porter. So he has engaged me to take Alfred's place for the present, at a salary of six dollars a week. I think that's pretty lucky."

"Then you won't have to leave home," said his mother, brightening up for the first time. "I was so afraid you would have to, and that would make it very lonely for Katy and me."

"No, I shall be at home, only you won't see much of me, for I've got to go to the store early, and I suppose I shall get home late."

"At any rate, you won't be away from Vernon. I don't think I could bear to part from you just now."

"Did you call and see Squire Turner, Harry?" asked Katy.

"Oh, yes; I almost forgot to tell you. He has taken the paper, and is going to write to a lawyer in Milwaukie about it."

"Does he think it is worth anything?"

"He doesn't give much hope, it's so many years

ago; so we won't count upon it. I asked him about letting me have a hundred dollars to start in business with, and he said he would let me know to-morrow. I didn't know then that I could get a place with Mr. Porter."

"I would rather have you with Mr. Porter."

"Yes, I would rather stay there for the present. But you must remember that it won't last but a few weeks. After that I may have to do as I proposed."

Harry went out, and labored manfully at the wood-pile for a couple of hours. Then he got the basket and carried in considerable and piled it up in the kitchen, so that his mother might not have the trouble of going out to get it.

Meanwhile Squire Turner was writing a letter to a Mr. Robinson, a Milwaukie lawyer, whom he knew. He stated the matter fully, giving his correspondent, however, the idea that the warrant had come into his own possession. In fact, he had made up his mind, in case the paper should be worth anything, to turn it to his own benefit, by hook or by crook. He was a rich man already, to be sure; but he was not contented with what he had, nor was he likely to be.

He was, as I have already stated, a grasping, avaricious man, and as long as money went into his pocket he cared very little that it was at the expense of the widow and orphan. He did not build any very high hopes on the warrant. Still he was not a man to let a chance slip by.

In the course of a fortnight he received an answer to his letter. As it is of some importance, I will transcribe it here

"MILWAUKIE, WIS., May 27, 18—.

"MR. TURNER, — Dear sir: yours of the 21st, asking information as to the probable value of a certain land warrant in your possession, has come to hand. It appears that the land was located, though the owner never appeared to take possession of it. In consequence it has fallen into the hands of others. The tract in question is a valuable one, being situated only a few miles out of Milwaukie, and has upon it several valuable buildings. My own opinion is, that if the matter is followed up, though you might not be able to get possession without a protracted lawsuit, so much value being involved, the present holders would be willing to pay a considerable sum by way

of compromise. It might be worth while for you to come on, and see about the matter yourself. I will assist you to the best of my ability.

"Yours respectfully,

"FRANCIS ROBINSON."

Squire Turner read this letter with a lively interest. So the neglected yellow paper promised to be valuable, after all. Perhaps, indeed, it might be worth thousands of dollars. In that case, Mrs. Raymond would be very well off.

The main question in Squire Turner's mind was, how could he manage so as to profit by it himself. He was meditating upon this as he walked home from the post-office, when he met Harry Raymond, driving the store-wagon.

Harry paused, and hailed the squire.

"Squire Turner," he said, "have you found out anything yet about that paper I left with you?"

"Not yet," said the squire, falsely; for he had no intention of disclosing the truth at present. "I am afraid we can't get anything for it after so many years. When I hear anything I will let you know."

"I was afraid it was too long ago," said Harry; "so I am not much disappointed."

"I am thinking of taking a little trip to the West before long," said Squire Turner. "I may be able to find out something about it then."

Harry started the horse towards the store, and thought so little of the land warrant that he quite forgot to mention the matter to his mother in the evening.

CHAPTER VII.

A MEAN TRICK.

Harry Raymond had been employed in Mr. Porter's store but a few days when he had a difficulty with James Turner, which deserves to be chronicled. For various reasons James cherished a dislike of our hero, which he was not likely to get over very soon. Harry had always distanced him in his studies, and, as we have seen, had carried off the prize for declamation, which James persuaded himself would have been his but for the partiality of Mr. Tower. Again, James aspired to be a leader among the boys at school and in the village. He felt that this position was due to him on account of the superior wealth of his father. When boys assert this claim to consideration, it is generally a sign that they have little else to boast of; and this was precisely the case with James Turner.

Now, it may appear strange, that though Squire

Turner was the richest man in the village, and Mr. Raymond one of the poorest, the boys paid much more respect to Harry than to the son of the wealthy squire. Harry was put forward prominently on all occasions; as, for example, when a military company was formed, he was elected captain, while James could not even obtain the post of simple corporal. Of course the latter withdrew his name from the roll in disgust; but the company, so far from being thrown into consternation, appeared to thrive about as well as before. This military organization went by the name of the Vernon Guards, and consisted of about thirty boys. They used to parade on Saturday afternoons, when a sufficient number could be gathered for duty, and the young captain, who had studied up his duties, discharged them in a very creditable manner.

James Turner, however, had one consolation in all this strange neglect. His superiority was conceded by one boy, who was in the habit of revolving round him like a humble satellite. This was Tom Barton, who has already been referred to. Tom was a born sycophant, and was ready on all occasions to flatter

James and join him in abusing Harry and Harry's friends. Tom's father was in California at the mines. His mother was a weak woman, of an envious disposition, who was always bewailing her fate in having married a poor man instead of a certain other person who had turned out rich, and who, as she asserted, had offered her his hand in early life. In fact, it was generally supposed that her complaints had driven her husband to California to seek for the fortune for which she was continually pining. As for Tom, she considered him one of the smartest boys in America, and, as might be expected, asserted that he took after her, and not after his father.

"There aint any Barton about him," she said. "He's all Jessup."

This was not far from true. Tom certainly did inherit his mother's mean and disagreeable qualities, and there were very few points in which he resembled his father, who was really a worthy man, and deserved a better wife than had been allotted to him.

It might have been supposed that Harry's misfor-

tune in losing his father would have led to a suspension of ill feeling on the part of James and his sycophant. But I have already said that James was a mean boy, and Tom was in this respect a very fitting companion for him. Indeed, Tom, besides espousing James's quarrel, had a personal grievance of his own. At the time that Alfred Harper entered the village store, Mr. Porter had an application for the place from Tom, which he had seen fit to decline without assigning any reasons for so doing. In fact, Tom had the reputation of being lazy and self-sufficient, and the store-keeper rightly concluded that he would not be likely to prove a very valuable assistant. When Tom heard that the coveted place had been given to Harry, he felt highly indignant, not only with Mr. Porter, but with Harry himself, and was anxious for an opportunity of wreaking vengeance upon our hero. Now, the manliest way would have been to make a direct assault upon him; but this he did not care to do. He knew that Harry had a pair of good, strong arms, and was ready on all occasions to defend himself. If he should venture upon an attack, it was pretty clear to him that he

would get the worst of it, and this would be very far from suiting him. He preferred to wait for some secret way of injuring him.

That opportunity came about a week after Harry had entered upon his duties in Mr. Porter's store.

It has already been said that one of his duties was to drive the store-wagon, and deliver groceries in different parts of the village. One afternoon he was driving at about half a mile distance from the store. Among other articles in the wagon was a basket containing three dozen eggs, which, by the way, were to be delivered to Squire Turner's housekeeper.

Just about this part of the road there was a cliff on one side, about twenty feet in height, with a steep, almost perpendicular, descent. The field terminating thus abruptly belonged to Squire Turner. It so happened that James Turner and Tom Barton were walking leisurely along the cliff just as Harry came driving by.

"There's Harry Raymond," said Tom, spitefully. "Old Barton must have been hard up for a clerk when he took him."

"I suppose he took pity on him," said James, "and gave him the situation to keep him out of the poor-house."

"That isn't the way he looks at it," said Tom. "He puts on as many airs as if he owned the store himself."

"Didn't you try for the place once, Tom?"

"Why, not exactly," said Tom. "I told him I would take it if he couldn't get anybody else. It isn't much of a place."

Of course this was only a salvo for Tom's wounded pride, for he had been eager to enter the store.

"I'll tell you what," added Tom, after a pause, "suppose we play a trick on Raymond."

"What sort of a trick?"

"Suppose we pitch a stone into that basket of eggs. There'll be an awful smash, and he can't see who did it."

This was a proposition which just suited James. It would get Harry into trouble with his employer, and this of course would be rare sport. Then, as they could easily withdraw from sight, he would

never know to whom he was indebted for the favor All these considerations darted through James Turner's mind more quickly than I have stated them, and he responded: —

"All right, Tom. You do it. You can fire straighter than I."

Tom needed no second approval. He seized a stone about as large as his two fists, or perhaps a little larger, and, bending over the cliff, fired it directly at the basket.

His success was all that he could have wished. His aim was a true one, and the first Harry knew of the "trick," there was a loud crash behind him, and the contents of the eggs were partially spattered over him. Glancing quickly back, he saw that the wreck was almost total. Of the three dozen eggs not one third had escaped destruction.

Now, though Harry was naturally good-natured, he felt that this was a little too much for good-nature. It might be a joke; but he could not see it in that light. He knew that he was likely to be blamed for the accident, and he resolved to find out how it came about. It was not very probable that the stone came

into the basket of its own volition. There was evidently some human agency concerned, and this agency Harry determined to ascertain.

Looking up, he just caught a glimpse of Tom Barton peering over to see what mischief had been done.

"It's that mean Tom Barton," he said to himself. "He's about the only fellow mean enough to play such a trick. Perhaps he thinks I'm going to stand it."

"Whoa!" shouted Harry.

In obedience to the summons the horse came to a halt.

Harry drew him to the side of the road, and jumped out of the wagon. He hesitated about leaving the horse unattended; but just at that moment Will Pomeroy came along.

"Just mind the horse a minute, Will," said Harry.

"Where are you going?"

"I'll tell you when I come back."

Our hero felt that there was no time for explanation. He began to clamber up the side of the cliff. This was a hard job, for it was nearly perpendicular,

but here and there were roots and bushes that helped him along. Probably his indignation helped him, for in a very short time he reached the top.

Tom Barton was elated at the success of his trick. After first looking over to see the extent of the damage, he withdrew to a short distance, and threw himself under a tree by the side of James Turner. He felt entirely safe, not having the least idea that Harry would undertake to climb the cliff.

The two boys were laughing together over the success of their trick, when the figure of our hero, his face red with excitement, and his hands chafed and torn, presented itself unexpectedly.

Tom sprang to his feet in dismay.

"Look here, Tom Barton," said Harry, in a quick, peremptory way, "what did you mean by pitching a stone into my basket of eggs?"

"Don't be afraid," said James Turner, in a low voice; "I'll stand by you."

This emboldened Tom. Though he would not have liked to engage in single combat with Harry, he concluded that our hero would be in no haste to engage both. So he answered, insolently: —

"None of your business!"

"It strikes me that it is my business," said Harry, warmly. "It was a mean, contemptible trick."

"What are you going to do about it?" sneered Tom.

Now I am not going to justify Harry for the course he took, but it was certainly very natural.

"Stand up here, if you dare, and you'll see," he answered, with compressed lips.

"Let's give him a licking, James," said Tom. "It'll do him good."

Both boys sprang to their feet, and advanced towards our hero. He saw that his task was not going to be an easy one. The united strength of both of his assailants was undoubtedly greater than his own. If he allowed the two to come to close quarters with him, he would probably get the worst of it. Here was a chance for strategy, and he resolved to improve it.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BATTLE OF THE CLIFF.

Some of my readers are no doubt familiar with the memorable combat between the Horatii and the Curatii, told in all the Roman histories. There were three brothers on each side, and the contest between them was to decide the fortunes of the armies to which they respectively belonged. After a time two of the Horatii lay dead upon the field. The third, unhurt, found himself opposed to three adversaries, all of whom, however, were wounded. These he managed to engage singly, and was thus enabled to overcome them in turn.

I am not sure whether Harry Raymond had heard of this historical combat; but when he found himself opposed to two enemies, it struck him at once that this was his proper course, if he wanted to come off victorious.

As Tom and James advanced upon him, he feigned to retreat.

"He's afraid!" said Tom, in exultation. "Let's give him a licking."

James had no possible objection. Indeed, he felt that there was nothing he would enjoy so much as to see our hero humiliated. He would not have ventured to attack him alone, but now with Tom's assistance there seemed an excellent opportunity, such as might not again present itself.

"Go ahead!" he called out. "I'll help you."

Tom did go ahead. Being a faster runner than James, he found himself separated from him by a considerable distance in the impetuosity of his pursuit.

Harry turned his head, and, seeing that his opportunity had come, suddenly faced round upon his astonished adversary.

Tom, unable to check himself, almost rushed into the arms of our hero.

"Now defend yourself!" shouted Harry.

So saying, he clinched Tom, who was too astonished to defend himself properly, and with a quick

movement of the leg brought him down heavily upon the ground, with Harry on top.

Lying on the ground, in such a position as to fit into the small of Tom's back, was a stone about as large as the one he had thrown into the basket of eggs. The sensation which resulted from falling upon it was by no means pleasant.

"Oh!" he whined, "I've broken my backbone Get off from me, Harry Raymond."

"I guess you'll get over it," said Harry, who knew that the hurt could not be very serious.

"Jim Turner!" shouted the fallen hero.

James, who had witnessed his friend's discomfiture, paused at a little distance. He began to doubt whether it would be prudent to take an active part in the hostilities. His confederate was disabled, and he strongly suspected that Harry was more than a match for him. Still he was rather ashamed to hold aloof.

"Let him alone!" he called out, from the place where he stood, making no motion to advance.

"Come and help me, Jim! You said you would," said Tom.

"I'll have you arrested," said James, preparing to war with his tongue.

"Take him off!" entreated Tom.

Thus adjured, James advanced with hesitating steps to the rescue. He would rather have been excused, and had there been any decent pretext for giving up the undertaking he would have done so. But, though his sentiment of honor was not very keen, it did occur to him that it would be rather mean to leave Tom in the lurch, after he had urged him on to the assault with the promise of assistance.

"Let him alone!" he exclaimed, reinforcing his failing courage with a little bluster, "or you'll get the worst licking you ever had."

"Who'll give it to me?" asked Harry, composedly.

He had merely retained his position, pinning Tom to the ground, but not striking him; for he was too honorable to strike a prostrate foe.

"I will," said James, with a boldness of manner which did not by any means correspond to his inward feelings.

So saying, he made a step or two in advance, in a threatening manner.

Harry sprang up suddenly, and advanced upon his new foe.

"I'm ready for you, James Turner," he said, "now or at any other time. Come on, if you dare."

James paused in his advance. He did not like the position of affairs at all. He had never bargained to meet Harry in single combat, and now it appeared likely that he would have to do so.

"Get up, Tom," he called out. "The two of us can whip him soundly."

"I can't do anything," whined Tom. "My back's most broke."

He rose slowly from the ground, and began with a rueful face to rub the injured portion of his frame.

Thus left to himself James saw that there was no backing out. He had provoked the contest, and must take the consequences. What these were likely to be he was cheerfully reminded by Tom's doleful face. He resolved to secure his co-operation if possible.

"Come along, Tom," he urged. "Just help me a little, and I'll manage him."

"I can't," said Tom, dismally. "That plaguy rock's worn a hole in my back."

"I'll stand you both," said Harry, stoutly. "You've served me a mean trick, and you ought to be punished."

Just then James noticed a stone about the size of his fist lying on the ground before him. It was a mean and cowardly impulse that led him to pick it up, and fire it full at our hero's head. Had it struck him, the injury would have been serious, if not fatal; but Harry quickly divined his intention, and dropped suddenly to the ground. The stone passed harmlessly over his head.

"You shall pay for that, James Turner," he said, angrily. "No one but a coward would do such a thing."

As he spoke he sprang forward, and grappled with his adversary. James, having a premonition of defeat, defended himself poorly, flinging out blows at random. In less than a minute he, too, was prostrate, with Harry on top.

"Help!" he screamed, making desperate efforts to unseat his opponent.

But Harry held him down with a tight grip. Tom had had enough fighting, and did not stir to his assistance.

"Get up, you ragamuffin!" he screamed. In fact he was more mortified that his defeat should have come from Harry Raymond than if his opponent had been of his own position. That a poor boy like Harry should treat with such indignity his father's son was a gross outrage which filled him with vexation.

"Let me up, you beggar!" he cried, again.

"You'll have to speak to me in a different style before I let you up," said Harry, coolly, for he felt that the advantage was in his hands, and that it was for him to dictate terms of submission.

"I called you by your right name," said James, provoked beyond the limits of prudence. "You are a ragamuffin and a beggar."

"It strikes me that you are a beggar just now," said our hero.

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that you are begging me to let you up."

"If you don't I'll have you arrested," said James, with another violent but ineffectual struggle.

"You're welcome to do it," said Harry. "Perhaps there'll be something to say on my side as well as yours."

"If you don't come and help me, Tom Barton, I'll never speak to you again," said James, whose anger was now directed against his confederate.

"I would if I could," said Tom, "but my back's too sore."

The fact was, that Tom's back was not quite so much hurt as he wished to have it believed, but he had no inclination to attack Harry again. The ease with which he had been thrown, caused him to realize that Harry carried "too many guns for him," as the phrase is; and, though he was ready to fawn upon James, he was not willing to compromise his personal safety for him. But a bright idea occurred to him.

"I'll go and call your father," he said.

James did not answer. He would rather have had Tom's personal aid, but that he was not likely to

obtain. Tom Barton, glad to get away, limped off towards the road.

"Are you going to let me up?" demanded James, fiercely.

"That depends upon whether you behave yourself. Promise to fire no more stones at me."

"I won't."

"You won't fire any stones?"

"No, I won't promise."

"Very well. Then you may lie here a little longer."

So the two remained in their old position. Five minutes passed, and James renewed his demand.

"As soon as you will say that you won't fire any more stones you shall get up."

"I don't mean to," said James, sullenly.

"All right! That's all I want," said Harry; and he relaxed his hold upon his prostrate foe, and rose to his feet.

James picked himself up, and glared at Harry with a look by no means friendly.

"You shall pay for this," he said.

"Who is going to pay for the eggs you broke?" retorted our hero.

"I didn't break them."

"You approved it, at any rate."

"Yes, I did," said James.

"You probably didn't know where I was carrying them."

"Where?" James condescended to ask.

"To your house. I've lost time enough already, and must be getting back."

Harry hurried to the road, where he found the wagon safe under the charge of Will Pomeroy. Jumping in, he drove in haste to Squire Turner's residence, and taking the basket of eggs carried them round to the side door, which was opened by Mrs. Murray, the house-keeper.

"Here are some eggs from the store," said Harry, holding out the basket.

"Why, they're all broke," said the house-keeper, in dismay.

"I know it," said Harry. "If you want to know how it happened ask James."

"Well, I never!" ejaculated the house-keeper, mechanically taking the basket. "The squire'll have to do without his omelet to-night, that's sure."

CHAPTER IX.

FIRE!

JAMES did not fail to make a report to his father of the outrage which he had received at the hands of Harry Raymond. Over the trick which Tom and he had played upon our hero he passed rather lightly.

"It seems there were two of you," said the squire. "Why didn't you give him such a lesson as he would have remembered?"

"I would if Tom had stood by me."

"Why didn't he?"

"Oh, he pretended to be very much hurt!" said James.

"Couldn't you manage young Raymond alone?"

"No; he's as strong as a bull. He's had to work for a living, and that has given him muscle."

"Then you and Tom had better watch your chance, and give him a sound thrashing. I am perfectly willing."

This was not quite what James wanted. The result of the first contest had not been such as to encourage him much to renew it, even with Tom's assistance, and this might fail him at a critical moment as on a former occasion.

"Haven't you got a mortgage on his mother's place?" he asked, hesitating.

"Well, what of it?" said the squire.

"Can't you call for the money, and if she can't pay it turn her out of the house?"

"I don't care to do it at present," said the squire. "You must settle your quarrel in some other way."

"Are you going to pay for the broken eggs?"

"As long as you broke them, I can't very well refuse."

"It wasn't me. It was Tom."

There's little difference."

James was rather astonished at the moderate view which his father took of the matter. He had been fully convinced that the squire would sympathize with him in the affair, and be ready to join in any scheme to punish Harry Raymond for his insolence. Under ordinary circumstances, this was precisely

what his father would have done. But there was a secret cause for his present conduct, and this shall at once be explained.

It has been said that Squire Turner had offered himself in marriage to Mrs. Raymond in early life, and that she had seen fit to decline his proposal. Both she and the squire had married, but now, by the dispensation of Providence, she was a widow and he a widower. Though now thirty-six, Mrs. Raymond was still a handsome woman, and, if surrounded by the appliances of wealth, she would make a wife of whom any man might be proud. Certainly she presented a very favorable contrast to the late Mrs. Turner, who had a sour, acid visage, and a temper to match, as her husband had often experienced to his cost. There is reason to believe that when that amiable lady was removed by death her husband was not disconsolate, but consoled himself with the fact that she could not carry away the property which she had brought him, and without which she would never have become Mrs. Turner.

Now the squire had had some vague thoughts that he might marry again, but no one in particular had

occurred to him as worthy to fill the place of the late Mrs. Turner. But when Mrs. Raymond was suddenly left a widow, and the report of the lawyer in Milwaukie rendered it likely that she might come into possession of a considerable sum of money, it set the squire to thinking.

Mrs. Raymond was still a young woman, and he had never got over the fancy he had felt for her in earlier years. Indeed, she was the only one that had ever touched the squire's rather flinty heart. He had not even liked the late Mrs. Turner, which was not much to be wondered at, for it is doubtful whether the warmest-hearted person could have felt much affection for so disagreeable a woman. He was rather pleased with the idea of offering his hand to his first love, especially if she could bring him a handsome addition to his present property. The chances of this he thought very fair. The lawyer had written very encouragingly, and he knew how rapidly real estate advanced at the West.

There was one important question, Would Mrs. Raymond smile upon his suit, or would she repulse him as before? The squire thought with proper

management he might secure her consent. She had outlived the period of romance; there was no rival in the way, and for the sake of her children she would find it advisable to accept a proposal which would at once remove all pecuniary anxiety. Of course, if she knew of the probable value of the land warrant, that would make a great difference. But Squire Turner resolved to keep her in ignorance of this, until he had time to settle his matrimonial plans.

It will now be understood why James failed to win his father's co-operation in his schemes of retaliation upon Harry. It was the squire's cue to be friendly and conciliatory, even to our hero, who he suspected had considerable influence over his mother, and might use that influence to defeat his plans. In his secret heart, however, Squire Turner disliked Harry not a little, and would have been very glad of any little disaster which might come to our hero. Should he receive a beating at the hands of Tom Barton and James, the squire would not be likely to censure either very much.

That very evening something happened, which went far to increase the dislike and aversion of the squire

to our hero, and in the end had considerable influence upon Harry's career.

It was between eleven and twelve o'clock that Mrs. Raymond came suddenly into Harry's room, and waked him up.

"Harry," she said, in a tone of excitement, "Katy is taken sick, and is in great pain. I want you to put on your clothes at once, and go as fast as you can to Dr. Lamson's."

Harry needed no second bidding. He could hear Katy moaning, and shared in his mother's alarm. He dressed in "double quick time," and set off by the nearest route for the house of Dr. Lamson.

The doctor lived at a considerable distance. By the road it was full a mile and a quarter. But there was a way of cutting off from a quarter to a third of a mile by "cutting across lots." This made the journey rather a dark and lonely one, especially as there was no moon, and there were but few stars out. Harry had a stout heart and a clear conscience, and was not easily daunted. Besides, he had his little sister to think of, and this was enough to fill his mind to the exclusion of anything else.

In due time he reached the doctor's door, and knocked. He had to repeat his knock. Upon doing so the doctor put out his head from an upper window.

"Who's there?" he asked.

"It's I, — Harry Raymond."

"Oh, it's you, Harry. Anybody sick at home?"

"Yes, my sister Katy. She is in a good deal of pain. Can you come right off?"

"I'll get ready at once. Will you stop and ride with me?"

"No, thank you, doctor. I'll run home and tell mother you're coming."

"I may be there first, Harry. However, perhaps you will feel better to go."

The doctor knew that when a friend or relative is in danger, nothing is harder to bear than passive suspense, and that action is a relief. So he interposed no objections to Harry's wish.

Harry naturally decided to return by the same short cut by which he had come. On the way was a lonely old building, aloof from the road, but very near his path, which had recently fallen into possession of Squire Turner. It was not tenanted, and

would require considerable repairs before it would be in order to receive tenants. Ten years before, it had been insured with a fire insurance company for an amount below its value at that time. The insurance had been kept up, but the value had so depreciated that it would be a profitable thing for the proprietor if it should be consumed by fire.

Squire Turner was aware of this, and in an evil hour, under the influence of cupidity, determined to set fire to his own building, in order to realize the insurance money.

Being in a lonely situation, he thought he should be able to set fire to the house, and return home before the village awoke to the fact that there was a fire, while there was not much chance of the wheezy old engine getting to the spot in time to arrest the conflagration.

Harry was a few rods from the house when his attention was arrested by a sight which struck him with dismay. A man muffled in an overcoat was stooping over a basket of shavings. In a moment there was a tiny light, proceeding from a match. This was communicated to the shavings, which

caught at once. The man threw the basket with its combustible contents into the house through a broken sash, and, after pausing a moment to judge whether it was likely to accomplish his purpose, turned swiftly away. His coat-collar was up, and his hat was drawn down over his face as he turned round. His amazement may be imagined when he found that the midnight incendiary was no other than Squire Turner himself!

"What can it mean?" he thought, bewildered.

Fifteen minutes later the house, which was a mere tinder-box, was in flames, and the startled villagers, aroused from their slumbers, saw a bright flame reflected against the dark midnight sky.

CHAPTER X.

AFTER THE FIRE.

By the time the fire-engine reached the burning house, the flames were so far advanced that there was no chance of saving it. For form's sake, a stream of water was thrown upon the flames from the well near by, but the supply was soon exhausted, and produced no effect whatever. So the engine was drawn back to the engine-house, the crowd dispersed, and in place of the old house there was a heap of half-burnt rafters and cinders.

The next day the fire was the topic of conversation throughout the village. Being in the store, Harry had an opportunity of hearing it discussed by those who "dropped in" to make purchases.

"Was the house insured?" asked old Sam Tilden, filling the bowl of his pipe with tobacco, preparatory to having a comfortable smoke.

"I reckon it was," said another. "The squire's a keerful man. He wouldn't be likely to neglect it."

"Here's the squire himself. You can ask him," said John Gaylord, the chief salesman, who was doing up half-a-dozen pounds of sugar for a customer.

Harry, remembering what he had seen the night before, looked up with mingled feelings as he saw the rather stiff and stately form of Squire Turner enter the door.

The squire, though not a good-looking man, was always carefully dressed. He regarded it as due to his position, and as no one else in the village except the minister and doctor were scrupulous on this point, he inspired a certain respect on this very account. So now, as he entered the store, in a decorous suit of black, with a stiff standing-collar rising above a glossy satin stock, swinging in his hand a gold-headed cane, those present looked towards him with considerable deference.

"Well, squire," said Sam Tilden, "you met with a misfortun' last night."

"Yes," said the squire, deliberately; "there was

a clean sweep of the old house. There isn't much left of it."

"Have you any idea who sot it on fire?" queried the old man.

"No," said the squire. "I came in to see if any one here could throw any light upon it."

There was one present who could have thrown some light upon it, and if Squire Turner had chanced to look behind the counter he might have noticed a peculiar expression in the eyes of Harry Raymond, who was watching him fixedly. The fact is, Harry was very much perplexed in his mind in regard to the occurrence. Why a gentleman should steal out of his house in disguise at the dead of night to set fire to his own property was a question which was invested with not a little mystery. But before the conversation was finished he began to understand it better.

"It must have been sot afire," continued Sam Tilden, positively. "There wasn't nobody livin' in it."

"No; it had been empty for several months."

"You haint got no suspicions, I s'pose?"

"Why, no," said the squire, slowly. "I suppose it must have been somebody that had a grudge against me, and took this way to gratify it. But who it may be I haven't an idea."

"I reckon it was insured?" said Sam, interrogatively.

"Yes," said the squire, cautiously; "it was insured."

"I said it must be," said one, who had spoken at an earlier stage in the conversation. "I knew, squire, you was too keerful a man to neglect it."

"It was insured when it came into my hands," said Squire Turner; "and I have merely kept up the payments."

"What was the figure?"

"I really can't be quite certain till I have looked at the policy," said the squire. "I've got all my houses insured, and I can't, without looking, tell exactly how much there is on each."

"That's the advantage of owning only one house," said Doctor Lamson, as he stepped in for a moment. "I'm not liable to make a mistake about my insur-

ance. In what company was your house insured, Squire Turner?"

"In the Phœnix Mutual, I believe. By the way, Mr. Porter, you may send up a barrel of flour to my house. I believe we are nearly out."

"All right, squire. It shall go up in the course of the day."

"Good-morning, gentlemen," said the squire, walking out of the store.

"I guess the squire won't lose a cent," said Sam Tilden, after he went out. "It's likely the insurance money will pay him handsome if the policy was took out years ago. I shouldn't wonder if he's glad the old house is gone. It was awfully out of repair."

"Very likely you're right," said John Gaylord. "I'd rather have the money than the house, for my part."

For the first time a light came to Harry's mind. He felt that he understood the whole matter now. Squire Turner didn't want the house, which would require considerable outlay to make it habitable, and he did want the money for which it was insured. As the shortest way to secure this, he had himself set the

house on fire. Now, no doubt, he meant to come upon the company for the amount of insurance money. To Harry's mind this looked like a swindle, like obtaining money by false pretences. Yet here was Squire Turner, the richest man in the village, occupying a very prominent — indeed the most prominent — position in town, who was actually going to carry out this fraud. Nobody except he knew that the squire was himself the incendiary. What ought he to do about it? Should he allow the insurance company to be swindled?

"Do you think Squire Turner will collect his insurance money, Mr. Gaylord?" he asked, of the chief clerk.

"Do I think so? Of course he will. He'd be a fool if he didn't."

"But people seem to think that the house wasn't worth as much as the sum it was insured for."

"Very likely not; but it was when it was insured, and as the payments have been kept up regular, the insurance company can't complain as I see."

"Suppose the man that set the house on fire should be caught?"

"He'd be tried, and put in prison."

This gave Harry something new to think of. The idea of Squire Turner's being put in prison was certainly a strange and startling one. Probably it made a difference as long as he owned the house himself. Still, if he claimed the insurance money, that again made a difference. Harry felt puzzled again, and in thinking over the matter he made several ludicrous mistakes, among others asking a boy who came in for some molasses how many yards he would have, which led to a mirthful explosion from the young customer, who looked upon it as a brilliant joke.

Not knowing what to do, Harry did nothing. Two days afterwards our hero saw the following placard posted up on the outside of the store, on the left-hand side of the door: —

"ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS REWARD! — For information that will lead to the discovery of the incendiary or incendiaries who set fire to the old Jackson farm-house, belonging to the subscriber, which was consumed on the evening of the 11th inst.

"ELIHU TURNER."

Harry read this placard with interest.

"I could claim that reward," he said to himself; "but would Squire Turner think my information worth paying for?"

CHAPTER XI.

HARRY MAKES A CALL ON BUSINESS.

A FEW days later Harry heard that Squire Turner had made a formal claim upon the Phœnix Mutual Insurance Company for two thousand dollars, the amount of his policy. On hearing this, he no longer hesitated as to his duty. He resolved to call upon the squire, and acquaint him with his information upon the subject. Accordingly, one afternoon, he went up to Mr. Porter, and asked for two hours' time.

"What for?" queried the store-keeper.

"I want to call on Squire Turner. I have a little business with him."

The store-keeper naturally supposed that the business related to the affairs of Harry's mother, and gave permission, as business was generally slack about that time in the afternoon, but requested Harry to be back by half-past three.

When Harry got started on his way to the residence of the squire, he began to feel that his errand was rather a delicate one. He, a mere boy, was about to intimate to a gentleman of high social position that he was a rascal, — that was the plain English of it, — and was conspiring to defraud an insurance company out of a considerable sum of money. It was rather a bold undertaking for a boy of fifteen. Perhaps Squire Turner might be so incensed as to kick him out of the house. Harry was a stout boy, but still of course he had not the strength to cope with a tall man like the squire. Had he been a timid boy, he would have shrunk from the encounter. But Harry was not timid. On the contrary, he was physically and morally brave, as anybody who knew him would readily testify.

"I'll take the risk," he said to himself, firmly. "I don't think Squire Turner will think it best to attack me."

He marched manfully up the front steps, and rang the bell. His summons was answered by a servant.

"Is the squire in?" he asked.

"Yes," was the reply; and the girl indicated the door of the "office."

Harry knocked.

"Come in," said the squire, in his usual grating voice.

Harry did go in.

Squire Turner was seated at his desk. He had a paper before him, which Harry rightly guessed was the fire insurance policy. The squire had been examining it with considerable complacency. Two thousand dollars was a large sum even to him, and certainly a very handsome consideration for the old Jackson farm-house, which with the land around it he had got, by the foreclosure of a mortgage, at a decided bargain. How the company had ever been induced to grant so large a sum on such a house, even in its better days, was a wonder; but insurance companies sometimes make mistakes as well as private individuals, and this appeared to be one of them.

For two thousand dollars, or a little more, the squire had been thinking he could build a nice modern house, which would make the farm salable at a considerably higher figure than before. This was a

very pleasant prospect, of course, and the harsh lines in the squire's face were smoothed out to a certain extent as he thought of it.

When he turned, at the opening of the door, and saw who his visitor was, he naturally concluded that Harry had come about the land warrant.

"I haven't heard anything more about your mother's Western land," he said. "When I do I will let you know."

"Thank you," said Harry; "but that is not what I have come about."

"Very well," said the squire, a little surprised, "you can state your business."

At this moment James Turner came in hastily.

"Father, I want a dollar," he said.

"What for?"

"To buy a bat and ball."

"Wait a minute or two. I am busy."

James looked at Harry superciliously, as if to imply that his business could not be of any particular importance, and took a seat.

"You may state your business," said the squire.

"I beg your pardon," said Harry, looking towards James, "but my business is private."

"Perhaps he wants to complain of me," thought James, "about the eggs. If he does he won't make much."

"I am not aware of any business between us," said the squire, with dignity, "which is of too private a nature to discuss before my son. I will, however, stretch a point, to oblige you, and request him to leave the room."

"It isn't on my account, but on yours," said our hero, bluntly, "that I wish to speak privately."

Squire Turner looked at Harry in cold displeasure not unmingled with surprise, at what he felt to be a liberty.

"That's a strange remark," he said. "However, James, you may leave the room. Here is the money."

"You have offered a reward, Squire Turner, for information about the fire the other evening," said Harry, when they were alone, thinking it best to plunge into the subject at once.

"Yes, a hundred dollars' reward," said the squire. "Do you know anything about it?"

"I do," said Harry, promptly.

Squire Turner was taken by surprise. What could Harry know about the fire and its origin? He himself knew all about it; but of course that knowledge was locked up in his own breast. In offering the reward he felt sure that it would not be claimed, and, under the circumstances, he felt that it was well to offer it. It would impress the fire company favorably, as showing his determination to ferret out the secret incendiary, and therefore he had forwarded a handbill containing a copy of his offer to the office of the Phœnix Mutual, together with his claim for the amount of insurance money.

Harry's prompt answer led to a suspicion in the squire's mind that our hero was trying to get the reward on false pretences.

"The money will only be given for positive information leading to the discovery of the incendiary," he said, coldly.

"I can give you such information," said Harry, with the same promptness as before.

"Perhaps," said the squire, with a sneer, "you can tell who set the house on fire."

"I can," said Harry, distinctly.

"Who did it?" asked the squire, beginning to feel nervous.

"Squire Turner," said our hero, feeling that the crisis had come, "you have asked me the question, and of course you wish me to answer it truly."

"Of course," muttered the squire, whose nervousness increased.

"Then," said Harry, firmly, "*you set the house on fire yourself!*"

The words were like a thunderbolt. The squire started to his feet, his face livid with fear, and then purple with excitement.

"How dare you say such a scandalous thing?" he exclaimed.

"Because you expect me to tell the truth," said Harry. "If you will listen, I will tell you how I came to know."

Hereupon he gave an account, in as few words as possible, of his midnight visit to the house of Doctor Lamson, of his passing near the house, and identify-

ing the squire in the act of setting fire to some shavings. Squire Turner listened, evidently in a state of nervous excitement, fidgeting about in a manner which indicated his mental disturbance. When Harry had finished, he spoke.

"This is the most impudent fabrication I ever heard. You mean to charge that I — a rich man, and, if I say it myself, universally respected — actually set fire to my own house at the dead of night!"

"I do," said Harry, firmly.

"I have a great mind to kick you out of my house," said the squire, violently.

"I don't think you will do it, Squire Turner," said Harry, who did not show a trace of alarm.

"Why not?"

"Because I have told the truth, and you know it," said our hero, "and if I told it outside, people might believe it."

"What would your word weigh against mine?" said the squire, but his tone was more confident than his feeling.

"I never told a lie, as everybody in the village will

testify," said Harry, proudly. "Of course it is an object for you to deny it."

The squire began to see that the overbearing policy was not exactly the one to pursue in this case. Harry was not to be frightened easily, and this he realized. Besides, there were other reasons why he did not wish to fall out with our hero. Accordingly he thought proper to change his tone.

"My young friend," he said, with a very significant change of tone and manner, "you are certainly under a very strange delusion. I should be angry, but I am rather disposed to be amused. You would only be laughed at if you should spread abroad such a ridiculous tale."

"It's true," persisted Harry.

"Consider a moment," said Squire Turner, with commendable patience, "the nature of your charge. It is rather absurd that I should set fire to my own building, — isn't it, now? What possible object could I have in so doing?"

"The insurance," briefly answered Harry.

"Yes," said Squire Turner, slowly; "the house

was insured, to be sure, but they don't insure to the full value."

"Everybody says that the house was insured for more than its full value."

"Quite a mistake. I would rather have the house than the money. In fact, it was quite a disappointment having the house burnt down."

"I don't know about that," said Harry, sturdily. "All I know is, that I saw you setting the house on fire with my own eyes."

Perspiration began to come out on the squire's brow. He had never anticipated such an obstacle to the carrying out his plans, and it did seem a little provoking when everything had seemed so favorable hitherto. He would like to have pitched our hero out of the window, or kicked him out of the house; but neither course seemed quite expedient. So, though boiling over with inward wrath and vexation, he forced himself to be conciliatory.

"I have no doubt you think you are right," he said; "but in the evening one is easily deceived about faces. I was fast asleep at the time, and, indeed, I knew nothing of the fire till my house-

keeper came and knocked at my door when it was nearly over."

This was partly true; but the squire didn't say that it was just after he had crept stealthily into the house.

"Still, as I am a friend of your family, and interested in your welfare," he continued, "I don't mind giving you the hundred dollars, not, of course, as a reward, but to help you along. Of course it is on condition that you say nothing of this ridiculous story. It would only involve you in trouble. Come up to-morrow and I'll give you the money."

"Squire Turner," said Harry, promptly, "I cannot accept your proposition, or money."

"Why not?"

"Because my story, whether ridiculous or not, is true. I don't care for the reward; I didn't come up here to get it."

"What did you come for?"

"I came to prevent your coming upon the insurance company for that money. If you will promise not to ask for the money, I will never say a word about how the fire came about."

"I can't promise that," said the squire; "but before claiming the insurance I will let you know. In the mean time you had better keep the story to yourself."

"I will," said Harry; and, rising, he left the room, leaving the squire in a very uncomfortable and unsatisfactory state of mind.

CHAPTER XII.

HARTLEY BRANDON.

When the squire was left alone, he began rather ruefully to think over the unexpected turn which affairs had taken. If he had disliked Harry before, he hated him now. He felt that the sturdy determination of our young hero was likely to place him in a very unpleasant dilemma. If he should not collect the insurance money, the house would be a total loss, and this would be very provoking. If he should collect it, he had every reason to believe that Harry would keep his word; and, as he was a boy of truth, many would no doubt believe him, and the insurance company would be sure to stir in the matter. There was another consideration. If he guiltily let the matter pass, and failed to make his claim, or recalled it, — for it was already made, — it would excite a great deal of surprise, and perhaps suspicion, and thus again he would be disagreeably situated. There

seemed to be only a choice of difficulties, as the squire realized. He fervently wished now that he had never burnt the house down. But it was done and could not be undone.

"I wish the young rascal was out of the way," he muttered to himself.

He wished it the more because Harry stood in the way of another plan which he had in view, namely, marrying Mrs. Raymond, in case the Western property proved as valuable as he anticipated. He had an instinctive feeling that our hero would not fancy him for a step-father, and would exert all his influence over his mother to prevent her accepting him, even if she might otherwise be willing.

"Plague take the young whelp!" muttered the squire. "I wish he was in Nova Zembla, or somewhere else, where he would never come back."

His uncomfortable reflections were here broken in upon by the entrance of the servant.

"There's a man at the door wants to see you, Squire Turner."

"Who is it?"

"It's a stranger."

"Well, tell him to come in."

The invitation was duly given, and directly there entered a tall man, very seedy in his appearance, with a repulsive aspect, who looked as if the world and he had not been on good terms for some time. He was probably about the same age as Squire Turner, — that is, fifty, — but looked still older, probably in consequence of the life he had led.

Squire Turner looked at the intruder in surprise.

"How do you do, Squire Turner?" said the stranger, familiarly.

"You have the advantage of me," said the squire, coldly.

"Yet you used to know me well," was the reply, as the visitor sat down uninvited.

"I don't know you now. Who are you?" demanded Squire Turner, who didn't feel it necessary to use much ceremony with a man so evidently under the frowns of fortune.

"I am your cousin, Hartley Brandon."

Squire Turner started.

"Hartley Brandon!" he repeated, in amazement. "I thought you were dead years ago."

"And wished it, no doubt," said the other, with a laugh. "Confess now you are not very glad to see me."

"I am not very glad to see you, as you are sharp enough to guess," said the squire, with a sneer. "You are not a relative to be proud of."

"True enough," said the other. "I see you are not afraid of hurting my feelings. However, I've had so many hard rubs that my feelings have got worn off, if I ever had any."

"What is your object in coming down here, for I suppose you have an object?"

"Suppose I say that it is for the sake of seeing about the only relative I have in the world. There's something in that, you know."

"Not in this case. We may be cousins, but we are not friends, and never will be."

"Come, that's frank, — true, too, I dare say," said Hartley Brandon, who didn't appear by any means disturbed at the coldness of the squire. "Well, as you say, it wasn't that. Blood's thicker than water, they say, but there are plenty of people I like better than you, who are my cousin."

"That is a matter of perfect indifference to me," said the squire, coldly. "I don't want to know what your object is not, but what it is."

"I am rather seedy, as you see."

"So it appears."

"This shabby suit, with half a dollar, constitutes all my worldly possessions."

"Supposing it to be so, what is that to me?"

"Can't you help me a little?"

The squire's mouth tightened, as it always did when there was an attack on his purse-strings. He seldom gave away money, unless he thought it would help him in some way, and he felt even more than usually unwilling to do so at a time when, owing to Harry's obduracy, he was threatened with a serious loss. No poorer time could have been selected by his cousin for his application than this.

"I can do nothing for you," he said, coldly.

"I don't mean you to give me money," said Brandon. "I only want an advance of thirty or forty dollars, which I will faithfully repay you with interest."

Squire Turner laughed scornfully.

"What security can you offer?" he asked.

"None at all, except my word."

"That isn't satisfactory."

"I thought you'd say so; but listen, and I will tell you how the matter stands. First, I suppose you would like to know how I have been employed for the last twenty odd years."

"You may tell or not, just as you like. I feel no particular interest in the matter."

"I have followed the sea,—I see you are surprised; but this is the way it happened. Twenty-five years since, I found myself high and dry in New York, with no resources, and nobody to look to for help. In my distress I fell in with a sailor, who treated me kindly, and proposed to me to adopt his profession. It was not particularly to my taste, and I knew it was rather late in life to begin; but I had no other resource, and I allowed myself to be persuaded. I had a hard time of it at first, as you may suppose, but after a while I became acquainted with my duties, and turned out a very fair sailor. Being possessed of a better education than belongs to the generality of seamen, I found myself able to rise.

On the second voyage, I shipped third mate. Then I rose to second mate; finally to first mate. I might have become captain if I had been a little more steady, but a fondness for drink stood in the way of my advancement."

"So you have been a sailor for twenty-five years."

"Yes."

"It was no doubt the best thing you could do. You don't think of giving it up?"

"No."

"Then I don't see what I can do for you."

"I've a chance to sail as mate next week in the ship Sea Eagle bound for China."

"Why don't you go, then?"

"Because there's a trifle in the way. I owe twenty-five dollars in New York, and if I don't pay it up square the party'll put a spoke in my wheel, and prevent my getting the situation.

"So you want me to advance you the necessary money?"

"Yes, I'll pay you back at the end of the voyage."

"Do you know the captain under whom you are to sail?" asked the squire, thoughtfully.

"Yes, a little."

"What sort of a man is he?"

"Oh, an average sort of a man, — rather a Tartar, so I hear from some who have sailed under him. He likes his ease, and leaves the vessel pretty much in the hands of his first officer."

A train of reflection had been started in the squire's mind by the communication of his kinsman. He wanted to be rid of Harry Raymond. Why could he not arrange with Hartley Brandon to smuggle him off to sea, where he would be out of the way of interfering with his plans? It might be difficult to manage, but no doubt some way would suggest itself. As for Brandon, there was no fear of his refusing. He was not troubled with scruples, and a small sum of money would buy his co-operation.

Then, again, the sea was a treacherous element. Accidents were frequent. Should Harry once embark on its smooth but fickle expanse, he might never come back again, or, if he did, it might be to

find him, the squire, his mother's second husband, and the relationship would seal his lips from disclosing the secret of which he had become possessed.

All these thoughts passed through the squire's mind much more quickly than I have been able to state them. The plan which has been briefly sketched seemed the only way out of the labyrinth in which he had become involved, and he resolved to make a trial of it.

"Well, will you help me?" asked Brandon, growing impatient of his kinsman's silence.

"I will," answered the squire, "upon conditions."

"Name them," said Brandon, brightening up.

CHAPTER XIII.

A LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

It is unnecessary to detail the conversation which took place between Squire Turner and Hartley Brandon, since the nature of it may be guessed from the events which followed. As might be expected, Brandon was by no means squeamish, and made no objection to what was proposed. Indeed, he made an occasional suggestion which was adopted by his kinsman. The squire did not, of course, think it politic to reveal the real causes of his hostility to Harry, nor of the reasons which he had for desiring that the boy should be out of the way.

He was too cautious a man for this, and moreover had too little confidence in Brandon, whom he regarded as an unprincipled fellow, being in this opinion not far from right. He merely said that he had reasons for wishing Harry out of the way, and expressed his willingness, should matters turn out

satisfactorily, not only to make Hartley a present advance of fifty dollars, but to pay him over a further sum of five hundred when the affair was over, besides what might be needed for preliminary expenses.

To the shiftless vagabond, who had been tossing about the ocean for a quarter of a century, five hundred dollars was a large sum, though we may consider it a trifling compensation for an act of villany. So he readily promised the squire his co-operation.

"It is best that you should leave Vernon at once," said the squire, when the arrangements between them were concluded.

"Why?" asked Brandon, rather disappointed, for he fully expected to be the squire's guest till the next day.

"Because it won't do for you to be seen by the boy. He would recognize you when you meet in the city, and this might lead him to suspect something wrong."

"What do you want me to do?"

"I will have my horse harnessed to the carryall,

and will take you over to the Wrexham station, where you can take the cars for the city."

"What time do the cars start?"

"In a couple of hours. We have no time to lose."

"Have you got anything eatable in the house? I'm almost famished. Haven't eaten anything since early this morning."

"I will look to that. Stay here, or rather I will lead the way upstairs. Some one might be in. How will some beefsteak suit you?"

"Just the thing. Only let there be plenty of it I've got a famous appetite."

Brandon was conducted upstairs to a back room on the second floor, where the squire suggested that he might as well fill up a portion of the time till lunch by brushing his clothes, and performing ablutions which appeared to be needful. He then went downstairs to give the necessary directions to Mrs. Murray.

"Broil some beefsteak and plenty of it," said the squire. "You may boil two or three eggs also, and send up a loaf of bread and some butter."

"Where shall I set the table?" asked Mrs. Murray.

"Never mind about a table. You can carry all up on a waiter to the back chamber when ready."

Seeing that the house-keeper looked surprised, he added, in rather an embarrassed way:—

"The fact is, the man was a school-mate of mine, who hasn't turned out very well. Out of pity, I am going to help him a little, but don't care about his being seen in my house."

This seemed plausible enough, particularly when Mrs. Murray saw Brandon, who certainly looked very much like one who had not turned out very well. The rapid manner in which the abundant meal melted away under his vigorous attacks was certainly a tribute to the culinary skill of the house-keeper, who was led to form a more favorable estimate of the shabby stranger in consequence.

In a little more than half an hour Squire Turner was on his way to Wrexham, Brandon occupying a back seat. They reached the depot ten minutes before the train arrived, so that there was ample time to buy a ticket.

"VERY WELL, YOU CAN STATE YOUR BUSINESS."

So the train was set in motion that was to lead to important changes in the life of our young hero. These it shall be our task gradually to unfold, and set on record.

Four days passed quietly. The villagers had ceased to talk of the fire, as another exciting occurrence had succeeded. Deacon Watson had been thrown out of his carriage and broken his leg, and the details of this accident were still fresh in the mouths of all.

Harry pursued the even tenor of his way in his new position, trying to make himself as useful as possible, and succeeding to the satisfaction of his employer. Always prompt, always reliable, Mr. Porter felt that in spite of his youth he fully filled the place of Alfred Harper, whose temporary loss he now regarded with equanimity.

Harry was weighing some sugar for a customer one afternoon when John Gaylord, who had just got through sorting the mail, said to him, "Here's a letter for your mother, mailed at New York."

"Let me see it," said Harry, who felt some curi-

osity as to who might have written to his mother, for her correspondence was very limited.

He took the letter in his hand, and looked at the direction. It was in a dashing business-hand, quite unknown to him, and revealed nothing.

"I will take it home when I go to supper," he said.

"Has your mother got friends in New York?" asked Gaylord.

"Not that I know of. I don't recognize the handwriting."

"Maybe it's a lawyer's letter, informing her of a legacy," said the senior clerk, jocosely.

"Very probable," said Harry, smiling.

It was already the hour when he usually returned for supper. Accordingly he put on his cap and went out of the store. Being a little curious as to the contents of the letter, he hastened his steps, and entered the house out of breath.

"You're a little early," said his mother. "Supper isn't quite ready."

"I hurried, because a letter came by this afternoon's mail. It's mailed at New York."

"New York!" repeated Mrs. Raymond, in surprise. "Who can it be from?"

"I don't know. Haven't you any friends there?"

"Not that I know of. Harry, you may take up the tea and toast, while I am reading the letter."

She tore open the envelope, and first, as was natural, turned to the bottom of the second page, and read the name appended to the letter.

"Lemuel Fairchild!" she repeated, thoughtfully. "I don't recall the name."

"Read it aloud, mother," said Harry.

She complied with his request.

This is the way the letter read: —

"No.— Nassau Street, Room 7.
New York, Nov. 7, 18–.

"Dear Madam: — Though personally a stranger to you, I knew your husband well, and have heard with the deepest regret of his sad fate. We had not met for years, but I have always cherished a warm regard for him, though on account of the absorption of my time by important business I have not been able to keep up a correspondence with him. But, without further preface, I will come to my object in writing.

"If I remember rightly, you have a son who must now be a boy of sixteen or thereabouts. No doubt you are anxious to get him into some kind of employment. In the country I am aware desirable opportunities are rare, and I presume you are at a loss how to secure him one. Now, I am desirous of taking a boy, and training him in my own business. Having no one in view, it has occurred to me that it might be a pleasant arrangement for you as well as for me, if I should take your son. I may add that I am a commission merchant, doing a large business. Can you send him up at once? As to wages, I will give him twelve dollars a week at first. He will not earn half that, but I shall feel that, in overpaying him, I shall be assisting the widow and son of my old friend.

"Yours very truly,

"LEMUEL FAIRCHILD.

"If you accept my proposal, I should like to see your son at my office some time Monday."

Mrs. Raymond looked at Harry in perplexity, after finishing the letter.

"Lemuel Fairchild!" she repeated. "It is strange I never heard your father speak of him."

"Perhaps he may have done so, and you do not recall the name."

"It may be so," said Mrs. Raymond, slowly, "but I do not think so."

"At any rate," said Harry, "it's a splendid offer. Think of earning twelve dollars a week, to begin with, in New York!"

"Yes, it's a good offer, but how can I spare you?" said his mother, sorrowfully. "It will be very lonely without you. Don't you think you had better remain in Mr. Porter's store?"

"That will only be for a few weeks, you know, mother. Alfred Harper will be getting well before long, and then I shall be out of a situation. I think we had better say yes."

Harry's ambition was fired by the prospect of a place in the city. Like many another country boy he had the most splendid visions of what city life was. By the side of a position in a city office his present situation looked mean and contemptible. Even had the pay been the same, he would have

preferred Now York to Vernon; but the fact that the salary offered in the city was just double was an additional inducement. Why, John Gaylord, Mr. Porter's chief salesman, though already twenty-five years of age, and with several years' experience as clerk, received just that, and no more. That Harry should be offered the same salary at fifteen was indeed a compliment.

"I expect board is higher in the city," said Mrs. Raymond.

"Yes, I suppose it is; but next year I shall probably have my pay raised. Who knows but I may get into the firm some day," said Harry, glowing with enthusiasm, "and make money hand over hand? Then I can take a nice house in the city, and you and Katy can come up and live with me. Won't that be nice?"

Mrs. Raymond confessed that it would be nice. Still she did not like to let Harry go. But he gradually won her to his side, and she admitted that there was something in his arguments. So, before he went back to the store, it was virtually agreed

between them that the offer was not one to be refused.

"Let me take the letter, mother," said Harry. "I would like to show it to Mr. Gaylord and Mr. Porter."

CHAPTER XIV.

HARRY ARRIVES IN THE CITY.

On going back to the store, Harry showed the senior salesman the letter his mother had received.

Now John Gaylord was in the main a good-natured young man, but he was not without the failings incident to humanity. It happened that he had himself been secretly desirous of going to the city, and obtaining some position which promised better than that of chief salesman in a country store. But he had no friends to help him in New York, and he was wise enough to feel that it would not be expedient to throw up a fair place in the country for the uncertain prospect of one in the city. But, for all that, he used to think oftentimes that his business abilities deserved something better than weighing out tea and sugar in small quantities for country customers. So when he learned that Harry Raymond, an inexperienced boy, had received

an offer which he would gladly have accepted himself, he naturally felt a little envious, and provoked with Harry for his good fortune.

"What do you think of it, Mr. Gaylord?" asked Harry.

"I think you had better stay where you are," was the unsatisfactory reply.

This was rather a damper to Harry, who had expected to be congratulated.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because you're a mere boy, and can't expect to earn twelve dollars a week."

"No, I don't suppose I shall at first; but then, you see, Mr. Fairchild was a friend of my father."

"But, when he finds that you don't earn your money, he'll get dissatisfied with you, and send you home."

"I don't know about that," said Harry, stoutly. "I mean to do my best."

"You have no experience."

"I shall get it."

"Oh, well, suit yourself," said the young man;

"only if it turns out as I tell you, you mustn't be surprised."

Harry made no reply, being rather offended at the manner in which his communication had been received. He did not suspect that John Gaylord was secretly envying him all the while, and contrasting his own poor prospects very discontentedly with Harry's. But he was not in the least discouraged. He had faith in himself, and felt sure that if he did his best, as he meant to, he should get on well enough. He gave Mr. Porter notice that he should leave him at the end of the week. The latter congratulated him on his good prospects, and expressed satisfaction with his services while in his employ.

The next day, as if by accident, Squire Turner entered the store, and, advancing to the counter behind which Harry was standing, said with unusual graciousness:—

"Well, my young friend, how are you getting on?"

"Very well, thank you, sir," said Harry.

"I think Mr. Porter may find it for his interest to engage you permanently."

"I have accepted another situation," said our hero, with a little excusable importance.

"Indeed!" said the squire, in assumed surprise. "In Vernon?"

"No, sir, in New York."

"I am surprised to hear it. It is not easy to obtain a situation in the city. How did you hear of it?"

"A friend of my father's, a commission merchant in Nassau Street, wrote to my mother, yesterday, offering it to me."

"What is his name? I may know him."

"Lemuel Fairchild."

"Lemuel Fairchild," repeated the squire, slowly. "I don't recognize the name. So you are going to accept it?"

"Yes, I am going up Monday morning. I am to have twelve dollars a week."

"An excellent salary. Well, I am glad to hear you are so fortunate. When I go up to the city, I

will call and see how you are getting along. What is the number?"

Harry gave the address, which the squire copied down in his pocket-book, and with a friendly salutation left the store. He had found out what he wanted to know, that the decoy letter had been received, and that the plan was likely to work well.

"He has swallowed the bait," he said to himself, with satisfaction. "I hope the rest of the plan will work as well. I shall not dare to draw my insurance money till he is out of the way."

The cordial manner of the squire impressed Harry rather favorably. In fact, he felt very much puzzled about him. It seemed hard to believe that he was meditating a fraud upon the insurance company. But, as might be expected, his own affairs occupied the greater portion of his thoughts, which was just what Squire Turner wished. The change in his mode of life was so great and so important that he could scarcely think of anything else. Besides, there were preparations to be made for his departure. He needed a new suit of clothes. It would be inconvenient to pay for them now, but the village

tailor readily promised to give him a four weeks' credit until he should be able to pay him out of his wages in his new place. This suit was to cost twenty dollars, and so good progress was made in getting it ready that Harry was able to wear it on Sunday to church, where he received the congratulations of his friends and school-mates.

As Harry had never been to New York, he was placed under the care of a gentleman who proposed going to the city on Monday.

He was up bright and early, having slept little, if the truth must be told, on account of the excitement which he felt. His mother was up, of course, also, and prepared a better breakfast than usual.

"I don't know how I shall get along without you, Harry," she said, despondently. "The house will be lonely."

"Oh, I'll come home soon to pass Sunday, mother," said Harry. "Besides, you shall hear from me; I'll write twice a week, regularly. Then you'll know I'm doing well."

"I'm afraid you'll get run over in the streets; they are so crowded with wagons."

Harry only laughed at this.

"Don't fear," he said. "I'm old enough to take care of myself. You forget how old I am, mother."

"You're only fifteen."

"A boy of fifteen ought to be smart enough not to get run over. You see, mother, you're a woman, and don't know much about boys. I'll do well enough, and you'll feel better about my going away, soon."

What Harry said was partly true. If the situation which he intended to fill had been a genuine one, his pluck and good principle would have been likely to insure his success. But he little knew what a plot had been formed against him, and what a series of adventures lay before him ere he would again see his mother and home. Could he have foreseen all this, brave as he was, he might well have quailed. But he supposed that all was fair and aboveboard, and that he would have nothing to encounter beyond the usual experiences of a boy in a city counting-room.

Time never waits for any one, and the hour of parting came. Harry hastily embraced his mother and little sister, and with a certain swelling of the

heart which he could not quite repress, hurried out into the road to the carriage which was to convey him to the railroad station.

Mr. Falkland, his companion, was not a resident of Vernon, but had visited the place on business, and had readily undertaken to act as Harry's guardian as far as the city. He spoke civilly to our hero, and asked him how he expected to like the city. But after getting into the cars, he took out a book and began to read. Harry took a seat behind, where he could look out of the window, and was sufficiently interested in watching the varied scenery through which he was whirled rapidly by the cars. His spirits began to rise once more, and bright dreams of the success he was going to achieve in the city swept across his mental vision. He was undecided whether, when he got rich, which he confidently hoped to be at twenty-five, he would install his mother in a nice house in the city, or build a house for her in Vernon, say as large as Squire Turner's. However, as he wisely concluded, there was no immediate necessity for deciding about this. He might leave it subject to further reflection.

So the train whirled on at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour, and in about two hours he found the houses growing more and more numerous, until the cars came to a final pause in the New York depot.

Mr. Falkland put his book into his carpet-bag.

"You have never been in the city before, I think," he said.

"No, sir."

"Then, of course, you don't know the way anywhere. I'll go with you at once to Nassau Street (that's the place, I believe), and then you'll be all right."

Harry was a little bewildered by the strangeness and novelty of the scenes to which he was introduced. So this was the great city of which he had heard so much. It was here that he was to work his way. Most boys would have felt a momentary depression and loss of confidence, but Harry had a good deal of faith and courage.

"Plenty of men succeed here," he said to himself; "and I'm bound to succeed too."

Just then his courage was reinforced by the thought of his motto, and he repeated to himself,

"'Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish,'" closing the quotation in a manner suited to his circumstances and determination.

After a while they reached Nassau Street, and the number which was mentioned in the letter.

"What is Mr. Fairchild's business?" inquired Mr. Falkland.

"He is a commission merchant."

His companion looked rather surprised at this statement, as Nassau Street is scarcely the place where a commission merchant would be likely to establish himself. However, he did not feel called upon to express any opinion on the subject to Harry. It was, no doubt, all right, and he had business of his own to occupy his thoughts. As long as he conducted Harry safely to his destination, he would have done all that he had agreed to do.

They paused at the foot of the staircase, at the bottom of which, on either side, was a sort of directory of names occupying the apartments above. Opposite No. 7 was the name, Lemuel Fairchild.

Harry pointed it out to his companion.

"That is the right name, is it?" asked Mr. Falkland.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I suppose you won't have any trouble in finding it. You don't need me to go up with you, do you?"

"Oh, no, sir," said our hero, promptly. "I'm all right now."

"Good-by, then."

"Good-by. I thank you for your care of me."

Harry shook hands with Mr. Falkland, and ascended the stairs. The staircase was rather narrow, and not particularly clean. It did not look quite so magnificent as Harry had anticipated, whose ideas of places of business in the city were rather brighter than the reality. But, then, he reflected that people at any rate got rich in the city, and that was the main point.

When he arrived at the head of the stairs he saw four doors, the highest number, of course, going up to 4. It would be necessary to climb another flight. This he did, and found himself very soon standing before No. 7. He was not quite sure whether he

ought to knock, or go directly in. On the whole, he thought it best to knock.

"Come in!" said a voice from within.

Harry opened the door, and found himself in the presence of his employer.

CHAPTER XV.

HOW THEY DO BUSINESS IN THE CITY.

The room into which Harry entered was possibly twenty feet square, and had rather a desolate look. It was poorly lighted, having but one window, looking upon a court-yard. At one end was an elevated desk, with a large ledger lying upon it. There were two arm-chairs in the office, on one of which a man of forty-five sat smoking a cigar. He was rather a hard-featured man, with stiff, wiry, black hair, and rather a seedy look.

"Is Mr. Fairchild in?" asked our hero, dubiously.

"I am Mr. Fairchild," was the unexpected reply. "Are you young Raymond?"

"Yes, sir," replied Harry, feeling considerably disappointed with the appearance of his employer as well as the office in which he was to work.

The fact was, he had formed a very different idea of both from the present reality. He supposed Mr.

"Is Mr. Fairchild in?"

Fairchild would be a portly man, handsomely dressed, and his place of business a large warehouse several times as large as Mr. Porter's store, which he had just left. But here was a miserable little twenty-foot room, at which, he felt very confident, John Gaylord would turn up his nose. He fervently hoped that none of his country friends would come and see him. After all the glowing anticipations he had formed, this was certainly something of a come-down. Then, he was disappointed in Mr. Fairchild himself. He certainly did not look by any means like a prosperous city merchant, doing an extensive business.

"Have you just reached New York, Raymond?" asked the merchant, picking his teeth with the small blade of his pocket-knife.

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "I came right here."

"All right. I was expecting you. So you want me to make a business man of you, eh?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry, wondering if he should dress as shabbily when he became a commission merchant.

"Well, I'll do my best for you."

"How is business, sir?" asked Harry, a little anxiously under the circumstances.

"Pretty good," answered Mr. Fairchild.

Harry involuntarily looked round the empty room with a puzzled air. He wondered what Mr. Fairchild had to sell, and where he kept it. He could not help wondering, also, where his salary of twelve dollars a week was to come from.

"Yesterday I sold a cargo of sugar," resumed Mr. Fairchild, — "ten thousand dollars' worth. I must have you make out the bill presently."

Harry looked and felt astonished. He began to suspect that, in spite of appearances, considerable business might be done even in this little room. Probably Mr. Porter's sales for an entire year would not amount to more than twenty thousand dollars, yet here was a sale of half that amount in a single day.

"Do you often make such large sales?" he asked, with a new feeling of respect.

"Do you call that a large sale?" said the merchant, indifferently.

"I should think it was, sir."

"Ah, yes, your being from the country explains that. I sell large quantities of merchandise on commission. I never take any consignment worth less than a thousand dollars. It wouldn't pay."

"Indeed!" said our hero, becoming more cheerful. The office was small and dull. Still the amount of business done there redeemed its significance.

"Day before yesterday I sold a cargo of cotton, amounting to — let me see —"

Mr. Fairchild went to the desk, and, opening it, took out a small blank book.

"Twenty-seven thousand five hundred and thirty-three dollars, and seventy-five cents," he read, from the book. "What would my commission on this sale be, at two per cent.? I want to see whether you are quick and correct at figures."

"About five hundred and fifty dollars," answered our hero, making a rapid calculation in his head. "If I had a pencil and some paper, I would give you the exact figures."

"Quite right. I see you understand the principle That's doing very fairly for one day, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir," said Harry, considerably impressed.

At this moment a man entered, and, with a hasty glance at Harry, addressed Mr. Fairchild.

"Ah, Miller, how are you?" said the merchant.

"Very well, but in a great hurry. Have you sold that cargo of silks yet?"

"Not yet."

"Have you thought over my offer of this morning?"

"Seventeen thousand dollars? Yes, I have thought of it, and I can't accept it. My price is eighteen thousand."

"Too much; but I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll split the difference, and say five hundred."

This offer, after a little chaffering, was finally agreed to.

"Raymond," said Mr. Fairchild, "make out a bill against Mr. Miller, Thomas Miller, of seventeen thousand five hundred dollars for the cargo of silks, at present on the ship Argo. You will find pen and paper on the desk."

Harry stepped to the desk, and with some tribulation made out the bill, as he would have done for a supply of groceries. He feared that it would not answer; but on handing it to Mr. Fairchild that gen-

tleman made no criticism. He just glanced at it, and handed it to Mr. Miller.

"Very well, I'll send round a check for the amount in the morning."

"All right."

"Good-morning. I am in a hurry;" and the silk purchaser went out.

"What do you think of that specimen of doing business, Raymond?" asked Mr. Fairchild, complacently.

"It didn't take long."

"No, that's the city style. And it pays too. Just calculate the commission on that sale at two per cent."

"Three hundred and fifty dollars," said our hero, promptly.

"I dare say you are not used to such transactions in the country."

"No, sir."

"Well, it's a very comfortable way of doing business. Probably I may have no other sale to-day — possibly not to-morrow; but two or three large sales a week count up."

Harry began to think he should not have to work very hard, and his doubt as to Mr. Fairchild's making money enough to pay him his wages disappeared.

"Do you want me to go to work at once?" he asked.

"Yes, I have some copying for you to do. Open that ledger."

Harry did so.

"You may commence at page 51, and copy down the entries upon these sheets of paper. You are used to copying, aren't you?"

"No, sir, but I can do it well enough."

"Very well. You may go to work at once. I must make a business call. I will be back in an hour or two, and take you to dinner."

He took his hat and went out. Harry began to copy industriously. The transactions entered appeared to date several years back, and Harry did not exactly understand what connection they had with Mr. Lemuel Fairchild's business. But then, as he reflected, he was not competent to judge of that. All he had to do was to obey instructions, and after a while he would know more. It was certainly very

astonishing the way in which business was done in the city. The prospect of being cooped up in a small, dark room was not very pleasant. Still Harry recalled the pleasant circumstance that he was earning two dollars a day, and was at the same time learning business. So far as he could see, the commission business was not very difficult to learn. Perhaps Mr. Fairchild might eventually admit him as a partner in the firm. If so, he would soon realize a fortune.

Harry kept on copying steadily while these thoughts were passing through his mind. After an hour or more the door opened, and Mr. Fairchild entered.

"How much have you copied?" he asked, advancing to the desk.

"About two pages and a half," said Harry. "Is it done right?"

His employer glanced at the writing carelessly.

"Yes," he said, "it will do very well. You have a good business-hand."

"I shall improve as I go on, I hope," said Harry, modestly.

"Oh, of course. I've no doubt I shall be able to make a business-man of you. But I suppose you are getting hungry."

Harry admitted that he was a little hungry.

"Well, we will go out as soon as a friend arrives whom I have invited to accompany us."

Fifteen minutes after, the friend referred to arrived. It was Hartley Brandon, — the same man who had visited Squire Turner in Vernon the week before.

He glanced sharply at our hero, and said something in a low tone to Mr. Fairchild which Harry did not understand. He little dreamed that the new-comer was to be intimately connected with his fortunes. Still less did he dream that he was an agent of Squire Turner, and that all the profitable business transactions of Mr. Lemuel Fairchild were merely fictitious, and got up solely to deceive him. Harry was a smart boy, but even smart boys are likely to be taken in, in matters of which they have no previous experience. But Harry's eyes were to be opened very soon.

CHAPTER XVI.

HARRY'S FIRST BUSINESS TRANSACTION.

LEMUEL FAIRCHILD conducted Brandon and Harry to Lovejoy's Hotel on Broadway, and led the way to the restaurant connected with the hotel.

"I've done a good stroke of business this morning," he said. "I can afford to stand treat. Sit down, Mr. Brandon. Sit down, Raymond. Now, what will you have?"

"Roast beef," answered Brandon. "I prefer the sirloin."

"Very good. What for you, Raymond?"

"The same," said Harry.

"Three plates of sirloin," ordered Mr. Fairchild. "By the way, Captain Brandon, I have been giving our young friend here a little inkling into the way we do business in the city."

"Well, my lad," said Brandon, "how do you like it?"

"I think I shall like it when I get used to it, sir," said Harry.

"I made a sale amounting to nearly eighteen thousand dollars this morning," remarked the commission merchant.

"You're not used to doing business on so large a scale in the country, I take it?" said Brandon.

"No, sir."

"The city's the place for a smart lad like you. You'll make your way here."

"I hope so."

"No doubt of it, if you attend to business, and do whatever you are told."

"I mean to do my duty."

"That's the talk," said Fairchild, who for a wealthy city merchant used a variety of phrases hardly to be expected. "By the time you're thirty you'll be a rich man. I didn't start with one quarter of your advantages. When I was your age I worked for three dollars a week, and had to pay my board out of it. See where I am now."

Mr. Fairchild, as I have stated, was dressed rather shabbily, and, so far as appearance went, did not

seem to have got far beyond the point where he started.

If Harry had not witnessed the extensive scale on which he transacted business, he might not have been very much impressed by his remarks; but, not suspecting any deception, he supposed that everything was as stated, and felt very much encouraged by his remarks.

"You'll be taking our young friend as partner some of these days, Mr. Fairchild," said Brandon.

"I make no promises," answered Fairchild; "but by the time he gets grown up I shall feel the need of sharing my responsibilities with some one. If he suits me, it may be as you say."

"Why not? I suppose you are growing rich fast, Fairchild."

"That isn't for me to say. I don't tell all about my affairs, as some do; but I could afford to give away a hundred thousand dollars, and have enough left to live handsomely."

"I congratulate you on your success, and hope our young friend here will succeed as well. By the way, I wish you would order me some coffee."

"Certainly. Call for anything you like. Raymond, will you have some coffee?"

"Thank you, sir, I should like some."

"We poor sailors," said Brandon, stirring his coffee, "don't get rich so fast as you merchants. We brave the elements, and you reap the profits. That's about the way of it, I take it."

"By the way, when do you sail, Captain Brandon?"

"It is not quite decided. In a day or two. Were you ever on board a ship, my lad?"

"No, sir."

"You'd like to see one, I suppose?"

"Yes," said our young hero, eagerly; "I should enjoy it very much."

"Don't you think you could spare him a little while to-morrow morning, Fairchild? Business isn't very driving, is it?"

"Yes, I could spare him, I think, if he would like to go."

"All right, then. I shall be passing your office in the morning, and will take him along and show him the Sea Eagle."

"You are very kind, sir," said Harry, gratefully.

He was rather surprised at the amount of attention he received from his employer and the captain. Indeed, he had reason to be, for I may remark for the benefit of my country readers, whose expectations might otherwise be unduly raised, that city merchants rarely offer a prospective partnership to a boy on the first day of his entering their employment. Had Harry possessed more experience, he might have been led to suspect that there was something queer about it; but he reflected that in the city things were different from what he had been accustomed to in the country. Even Mr. Porter, who only kept a common village store, had not said anything about taking him into partnership at any period, however remote; but here was a wealthy city merchant who held out the tempting inducement. No wonder our hero indulged in some gorgeous castle-building, and began to dream of what he would do when he was junior partner in the city firm of Fairchild and Raymond.

At length the dinner was over, and the three walked back in company to the office in Nassau Street.

"What shall I do, Mr. Fairchild?" asked Harry.

"You may keep on with your copying," said his employer, carelessly. "I have some business with Captain Brandon, and shall be away with him most of the afternoon. You can attend to the office."

"Yes, sir.'

"If any parties should call on business with me, you may tell them to call to-morrow morning."

"Yes, sir."

"If a gentleman should call, and inquire my price for a consignment of spices, you may say that the lowest figure is ten thousand dollars."

"Yes, sir."

"If he should be willing to pay that, you have my authority to close the bargain."

"Yes, sir."

Here Mr. Fairchild went out, and Harry was left to himself. When he reflected that he was authorized to close a bargain of so extensive a character, involving property to the amount of ten thousand dollars, he felt considerably raised in his own estimation.

"I might have plodded on in Vernon for fifty

years, before having such a responsibility thrown upon me," he said to himself.

He continued his copying for an hour, when the door opened, and a man entered briskly.

"Is Mr. Fairchild in?" he asked.

"No, sir."

"When will he be in?"

"He may return late in the afternoon. He left word, if any one called, to ask them to come back to-morrow morning."

"That won't do for me. I must leave the city this evening. I am sorry not to find him in," said the stranger, in a tone of vexation.

"Perhaps you will leave word about your business, and he can write to you."

"It was about some spices that I wished to purchase, if we could come to terms."

"Oh," said Harry, with animation, "he left word with me about that. I can tell you whatever you wish to know."

"Do you know his price, — his lowest price?"

"Yes, sir; it is ten thousand dollars. He won't take a cent less."

"You are sure of that?"

"Yes, sir, he told me so expressly."

"If he were here I would close the bargain."

"You can do so now. I have authority to sell," said our hero, in a tone of pardonable importance.

"Indeed! You are quite a man of business of your age. However, if you have authority for selling, you may make out a bill, and I will send round my check."

"Very well, sir."

Harry did as requested, and the stranger, expressing himself satisfied, departed.

Previous to Mr. Fairchild's departure, he gave Harry permission to write home if he desired it. Our hero decided to avail himself of this permission, being anxious to apprize his mother of his position, and the circumstances in which he found himself. Writing immediately after the important business transaction just mentioned, he may be pardoned if his letter is somewhat sanguine, and confident in its tone.

This is what he wrote: —

"DEAR MOTHER: — It is so short a time since I left home that you may suppose I will have nothing to write; but I find things very different in the city from what they are in Vernon. You will be surprised when I tell you that I have just sold a lot of spices for ten thousand dollars. Mr. Fairchild was out, and told me what price to ask. We don't keep the goods we sell here. I don't know where they are kept yet; but I shall learn more about the business when I have been here longer. The commission which Mr. Fairchild gets on the sale I made amounts to two hundred dollars; so I think I have earned my wages so far, don't you?

"I think I shall like Mr. Fairchild. He seems disposed to be kind to me, and has said something about taking me into partnership some time, if I suit him. I shall try hard to do so, as that would bring me a very large income, and I could do a great deal for you, dear mother, and little Katy. If you should see our place of business, you would be surprised that so large a business could be done here. It is only a small room, and not very pleasant. I felt disappointed at first, but I begin to understand bet-

ter now how they manage in the city. I was disappointed in Mr. Fairchild, also. He does not seem to care much about dress, considering how rich he is, and what a splendid business he does. He has introduced me to a sea-captain of his acquaintance, who has invited me to go on board his vessel tomorrow. I shall like it, as I never was on a ship. Most of my time is spent in copying from a ledger. I don't know yet where I am to board; Mr. Fairchild has not told me, but I will try to write you again tomorrow, and let you know all about it. I wish you were living here in the city, so that I could board with you. That will come some time, I hope. I close with much love to you and Katy

"Your affectionate son,

"HARRY RAYMOND."

This letter gave great comfort to Mrs. Raymond. She felt that, though Harry was separated from her at present, he had embarked upon a prosperous business career, and that better times were in store for both. Poor woman! it was the last letter she received from Harry for many a long, tedious day.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FIRST NIGHT IN THE CITY.

PROBABLY the reader has noticed, with some surprise, that Mr. Fairchild addressed his sailor confederate as *Captain* Brandon, and may have thought the name wrongly applied. But by a lucky accident, as he termed it, he had been unexpectedly elevated to the chief command of the vessel on which he was about to sail. Captain Hatch, who had been expected to fill this place, was a good sailor, but addicted to intemperate habits. In a fit of intoxication only two days previous, he had got into a fracas, and been so severely injured that it was found necessary to send him to the hospital, where he was likely to be detained some time. Meantime the Sea Eagle was all ready to sail, and the owners, without knowing much of Hartley Brandon, who had been engaged as first mate, offered him the captain's place, which it is needless to say he accepted with alacrity.

It was a position which for years he had striven to obtain, but until now unsuccessfully. So far as seamanship was concerned, he was as well fitted for the place as many who had filled it for years; but he was reckless and unreliable, and disposed at times to be despotic, so that he had never been popular with the crews which he had commanded as officer. However, there was little to choose, and to this fact he was indebted for his present post.

Lemuel Fairchild was a seedy adventurer, whom he had engaged for a small consideration to play the part of a commission merchant, in order to draw Harry to the city, where there would be an opportunity to carry out his, or rather Squire Turner's, intentions, with regard to him. Of course, all the large business transactions were bogus, the parties pretending to purchase cargoes being intimates of Fairchild. The office in Nassau Street had been hired for a week only, as that would be sufficient for Brandon's purpose. The ledger, out of which our hero was employed to copy, had formerly belonged to a business house now bankrupt, and had been bought cheap of a paper firm in Ann Street, whither

it had found its way among the waste which is diligently gathered by the squalid army of rag-pickers, that usually prowl about the streets, and explore the lanes and alleys of the great metropolis.

The reader is now in possession of all the net-work of deception by which Brandon's ingenuity had contrived to dupe our young hero. It is no wonder that, smart as he was, he failed to discover this. Whatever seemed strange to him he naturally attributed to his want of knowledge of city ways.

When night came, and the office closed, Mr. Fairchild took Harry to Lovejoy's once more to take supper.

"I must get a boarding-place for you to-morrow," he said. "To-night, I will secure a room for you here."

"Where do you live, Mr. Fairchild?" asked Harry, with natural curiosity.

"Why, the fact is, I am boarding at the hotel myself just at present. I have a fine house up town, but it is being painted and refurnished, and, until that is finished, I board at a hotel."

"Are you married?" continued Harry, who was

something of a Yankee, as he showed by his questions.

"My wife and children are travelling in Europe," said Mr. Fairchild, telling, of course, an unblushing falsehood. "I would join them if I could get away from my business. I must wait till I have a partner to leave in charge." And he looked at Harry in a significant way, which caused our young hero's heart to beat with proud anticipations.

They made a very good supper, and then sat down for a while in the public room, Fairchild smoking a couple of cigars with evident enjoyment. He offered one to Harry, which the latter declined, having fortunately never acquired a habit that to boys, at least, can never be productive of good.

About eight o'clock Harry asked permission to go to bed. His long ride in the morning, with the new experiences of his first day in the city, had produced a feeling of fatigue.

"Oh, yes, you can go to bed if you like," said Fairchild. "I'll speak to the clerk to give us a room with two beds."

"How early do you want me to get up in the morning, Mr. Fairchild?"

"How early do you get up in the country?"

"About half-past five."

"We don't rise so early in the city. We'll breakfast at eight, and get to the office at nine. Any time before eight will do."

Harry thought that nine was rather late to commence business; but this, as he supposed, was only another difference between the city and the country.

Harry soon fell asleep in spite of the rattling of wheels and the never-ceasing noise in the busy street beneath. He was too tired even to dream, but slept soundly until the next morning.

When he awoke it was broad daylight. He looked across the room, and saw Fairchild still sleeping. He jumped out of bed, and dressed hastily. Remembering that it was his first morning in the city, he was eager to go downstairs, and look about him.

Fairchild opened his eyes sleepily, as he completed dressing.

"Up already, Raymond?" he asked, in a drowsy tone.

"Yes, sir."

"What time is it?"

"I just heard it strike seven."

"Well, go down if you like. I will be down by eight o'clock."

Harry availed himself of the permission, and descended four flights of stairs, for they were on the fifth story, to the office.

As he emerged into the street, a ragged urchin came up and accosted him with the familiar question, "Shine yer boots?"

"Go ahead," said Harry, perceiving that his boots were stained with mud.

The task was performed in a creditable style, and our hero was called upon to disburse ten cents. He resolved, as soon as he got settled in a boarding-house, to buy a brush and some blacking for himself, feeling that he was not yet in circumstances to pay ten cents daily for having his boots blacked.

He stood at the door of the hotel, and watched the throng of wayfarers, which, commencing two hours before, would flow without interruption through the busy street until the small hours. It was to

our hero, born and bred in the quiet country, an animated and interesting spectacle, and he felt glad, in spite of a certain feeling of loneliness, that he was employed in the city.

At eight o'clock his employer came down, and they went together into the saloon, where they took a substantial breakfast, the expense being defrayed by Captain Brandon, acting for Squire Turner.

Shortly afterwards they went round to the office in Nassau Street.

Lemuel Fairchild seated himself in his position of the day before, with his heels on the mantel-piece, and diligently perused the columns of the "New York Herald," a copy of which he had bought in the street below.

"What shall I do, Mr. Fairchild?" asked Harry.

"Go on with your copying," said Fairchild, not lifting his eyes from the paper.

So our hero opened the ledger, and went to work. His task was not a very interesting one. Still he was earning two dollars a day, and this money would enable him to provide for his mother; so he

buckled to it in earnest, determined to show his employer that he was not afraid of work. He had commenced working for the partnership of which a prospect had been given him.

About ten o'clock the door opened, and Brandon entered.

"Good-morning, Captain Brandon," said Fairchild, rising.

"Good-morning, Fairchild. Good-morning, my lad."

"Good-morning, sir," answered Harry.

"Well, my lad, are you ready to make a little visit to my ship?"

"Yes, sir, if Mr. Fairchild is willing."

"Oh, he'll be willing; I'll guarantee that. Your writing can wait till another time. Eh, Fairchild?"

"Yes, he can go," assented the merchant.

Harry picked up his hat, and accompanied Brandon to the street.

"It's all right," said Brandon, in a whisper, placing a small roll of bills in the hand of Fairchild. "It'll be a long time before you set eyes on your office-boy again."

CHAPTER XVIII.

GOING ON BOARD.

HARRY crossed Broadway with his companion, and went down a side street to the North River pier, at which lay the Sea Eagle, of which Brandon had obtained the command. It was a vessel of good size, and was now all ready for sea. This fact, however, Captain Brandon did not care to communicate to his young companion.

"How soon do you sail, Captain Brandon?" asked Harry.

"In a day or two," said Brandon.

"Is your voyage a long one?"

"We are bound for China."

"That is a long trip."

"Yes, a very long one."

"Don't you get tired of the sea?"

"Oh, we sailors get used to it."

"I don't think I should like it."

"So you wouldn't like being a sailor?" said Brandon, looking at the lad with a meaning which the latter did not understand.

"No, I don't think I should."

"So I thought at your age; but I became a sailor, after all."

However it might have been in the case of Captain Brandon, Harry thought it very improbable that such a change would take place in his own views.

At length he reached the pier. Bales of merchandise lay scattered about, and there was a general appearance of confusion and disorder.

"There is my vessel," said Captain Brandon, pointing it out. "Don't you want to go to China with me?"

"Thank you," said Harry, with a smile, "but I will wait till I am older."

"And then go as a merchant, I suppose?"

"Perhaps so."

"Well, we will go on board, at all events. I will show you about."

Harry ascended to the deck, and Captain Brandon followed. The latter began to point out and name

various parts of the vessel, walking about with our hero. The sailors looked with some curiosity at Harry, but of course asked no questions. The mate, however, Mr. Hawkes, after speaking with Brandon about some matter connected with the vessel, asked, "Is that the cabin-boy?"

"Certainly," said Brandon.

"He asks if you are the cabin-boy," he said, after the mate had passed on. "It's a good joke, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Harry, smiling.

"Now suppose we go into the cabin," said Brandon.

"Thank you," assented Harry.

Accordingly they descended into the ship's cabin, which, though small, was very comfortable.

"Sit down, Raymond," said the captain, setting the example.

On the cabin table was spread out a slight repast, consisting of sandwiches and ale.

"We'll take a little lunch," said Brandon. "It's hungry work walking about the streets. You can eat a little something, I guess."

"Thank you, sir," said Harry, accepting a sandwich.

"Let me pour you out some ale."

"I don't think I care for any, thank you."

"Pooh, nonsense, ale won't do you any harm;" and Brandon filled his glass.

Harry had never even tasted of ale, but he did not know how to refuse the captain's hospitality, and raised the glass to his lips. The taste was not altogether agreeable, so he merely sipped a little, and set it down again.

"Don't you like it?"

"Not very much."

"Never mind, it'll do you good. Nothing more wholesome."

"How long will your voyage be, Captain Brandon?"

"Eighteen months; perhaps longer. By the time I get back, I suppose you will have become quite a man of business."

"I hope so," said Harry.

"How do you like my friend Fairchild?"

"He has been quite kind to me. I think I shall like him."

"Keep on, and some time you may be as rich as he," said the captain, closing the remark with a laugh, for which our hero could see no good reason.

"I should like to be rich, for my mother's sake," said Harry, seriously.

"For your mother's sake, of course. Let me see, — what's the name of the town you come from?"

"Vernon."

"Ah, yes, I think I've heard of it. A small place, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir, it's only a village."

"Any rich people there?"

"There's one, — Squire Turner."

"Squire Turner?" repeated Brandon. "What sort of a man is he?"

He asked the question carelessly, but fixed his eyes on Harry as he spoke. It will be remembered that Squire Turner, unwilling to trust his scapegrace cousin too far, had carefully kept hidden from him the cause of his hostility to our hero. This naturally stimulated the curiosity of Brandon, to

whom it occurred that he might, by questioning the boy, draw out the truth.

"He's quite a prominent man in Vernon," answered Harry, cautiously.

"I suppose he is popular, also."

"Not very popular."

"Why not?"

"He is not very liberal."

"Then you don't like him?"

"I haven't had much to do with him."

"Confound him! why don't he speak out?" said Brandon to himself. It occurred to him, however, that further questions, respecting a man whom he was not supposed to know, might excite the suspicions of the boy, and he refrained.

Meanwhile Harry, who had a healthy boy's appetite, had commenced eating his second sandwich, but he had not again tasted of the ale.

"Come," said Captain Brandon, "suppose we drink success to the Sea Eagle, and a quick and prosperous voyage."

So saying, he placed the glass to his lips.

"With pleasure," responded Harry, following his

example. He merely tasted the ale, however, and then set down the glass.

"That will never do, my lad," said the captain. "It is always usual, on such occasions, to drain the glass."

"I don't like ale very well."

"But you won't refuse to drink it, under such circumstances?"

Fearing that his refusal might be misconstrued, Harry gulped down the liquid, though with some difficulty.

"Come, that's well," said the captain, with satisfaction. "I won't ask you to drink any more. Now suppose I tell you a little of the countries I have visited. We sailors see strange things."

"I should be glad to have you," said our hero, thinking that the captain took great pains to please him.

Brandon launched out into a long and circumstantial account of Brazil, and afterwards of Australia, both of which he had visited. Harry listened at first with interest, but gradually a strange sensation of drowsiness came over him. His eyes

drooped heavily, and it was with a continual effort that he kept them open. The captain lowered his voice, and kept talking in a low, monotonous tone that helped the effect of the sleeping potion which, unobserved, he had mingled with the ale in Harry's glass.

"I feel sleepy," said our hero, at length, after making a desperate effort to keep awake. "It is strange, so early in the day."

"I observed you found it hard to keep awake. I suppose it is the noise and bustle of the city, to which you are not accustomed. I'll tell you what, my lad, I've got a little business to attend to on deck. As I shan't go back to Nassau Street for an hour or two I'll give you that time for a nap."

"Thank you, sir," said Harry, drowsily. "Won't Mr. Fairchild think it strange, my being away so long?"

"I'll make it all right with him. He's very good-natured. So just lie down, and have your nap out."

Harry lay down, and in two minutes his senses were locked in profound repose. Captain Brandon

looked at him with satisfaction as he lay stretched out before him.

"It was a lucky thought of mine, the sleeping potion," he said to himself. "He's polite enough, but there's plenty of will and determination about him. I can see that by the cut of his lip. He might have made me considerable trouble. Now, he's safe to sleep eighteen hours at least, unless the druggist deceived me."

He went on deck, taking care, however, to lock the cabin door behind him. On the deck he met Mr. Hawkes, the mate.

"Well, Mr. Hawkes," he said, "what is the prospect?"

"I think we shall get off in an hour, Captain Brandon."

"Good."

"I didn't quite understand about the lad you had with you. Does he sail with us?"

"Yes."

"As cabin-boy?"

"Yes, but he doesn't know it."

"Ah, I see," said Hawkes, nodding intelligently.

"His friends have thought it best to send him to sea, but he is obstinate and headstrong, and might make trouble; so I agreed to manage it."

He briefly related the strategy of which he had made use. The mate laughed approvingly.

"We'll make a sailor of him before we get through," he said.

"No doubt of it."

Meanwhile our hero, wrapped in a sleep unnaturally profound, slumbered on happily unconscious of the unjustifiable plot which had been contrived against him. On deck all was bustle and hurry. The pilot was all ready on board, the sailors were hurrying about in obedience to the quick commands of the officers, the creaking of cordage was heard, and in a short time the Sea Eagle had commenced her voyage. But Harry heard nothing. His slumber was profound. His career as an office-boy was at an end, and after one brief day in the great city he was drifting away unconsciously from home and friends, in the power of a reckless man, from whose despotism there was no appeal.

I am quite sure that my young readers will all

sympathize with Harry. His misfortune was in no sense occasioned by his misconduct. He had left home with a firm determination to do his duty, and work his way upward to a position where he could be of service to his mother and sister; but all his plans seemed disastrously interrupted.

But I do not despair of Harry yet. Hitherto his course has been smooth, and he has had no opportunity of showing what he is. Difficulties develop strength of character, and it is pretty clear that Harry has got into difficulties, and those of a serious kind.

Will he sink or swim?

CHAPTER XIX.

HARRY REALIZES HIS POSITION.

For eighteen hours that long, unnatural sleep held our hero in its benumbing grasp. For eighteen hours he lay utterly unconscious of what was passing around. But at the end of that time sleep loosened its hold upon him. He opened his eyes and looked bewildered. He was almost instantly made aware that the vessel was in motion. On standing up he found himself staggering from one side of the cabin to the other, for a brisk wind had sprung up, causing considerable motion to the ship.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Harry, in dismay, "the vessel has started. What will Mr. Fairchild say? He will think I have run away."

He blamed himself very much for having fallen asleep, but, not yet suspecting bad faith on the captain's part, could not understand why he had not been waked up in time to go on shore.

He hurried to the cabin door, and tried to open it, but in vain. It was securely locked.

"What can it mean?" thought our hero, in utter bewilderment.

He shook the door, and called out at the top of his voice: —

"Captain Brandon, let me out!"

There was no answer.

Harry continued calling for five minutes, shaking the door meanwhile. At last, indignant, and for the first time suspecting that something was wrong, he began to kick against the panels violently, calling out: —

"Captain Brandon!"

This time he received attention. Steps were heard outside, a key was put in the lock, and the captain made his appearance.

"What are you kicking up such a row about?" he demanded, harshly.

"Has the vessel sailed?" asked Harry, anxiously.

"Yes, it has."

"But I am not to go. Can't you send me on shore?"

The captain answered this appeal, with a horse-laugh.

"Look here, youngster, how far do you think we are from New York?"

"I don't know."

"Then I'll tell you. We have sailed so far about a hundred and fifty miles."

"A hundred and fifty miles!" ejaculated our hero, his breath almost taken away at the magnitude of this disaster.

"Yes, a little more than that possibly. Perhaps you'd like to have me send you back in a small boat?"

"How long have I been asleep?" asked Harry, finding the captain's statement almost incredible.

"You went to sleep yesterday about noon, and now it's the next morning."

"Is this true?"

"Do you dare to question the truth of anything I say, you impudent young rascal?" said the captain, fiercely.

Harry had not got over his bewilderment. He understood how he was situated, and that his misfor-

tune was due to the captain's neglect to wake him up.

"Captain Brandon," he said, calmly, "you promised to wake me up, and send me on shore. Why didn't you do it?"

"Do you think I'm going to be catechised by such a young lubber as you?" demanded Captain Brandon, with an oath.

"You've served me a mean trick," said Harry, indignantly, facing the captain with his youthful form drawn up, and his face flushed with anger.

"Young man, do you know where you are?" said the captain, sternly.

"I am where I ought not to be. In the cabin of the Sea Eagle."

"And do you know who I am?"

"You are the captain."

"You are right there. I command this vessel, and all on board, and I won't tolerate any mutiny;" qualifying the last word with an oath.

"You have no authority over me, Captain Brandon," said Harry, proudly. "You have entrapped me on board this vessel. I am not here of my own

free will, and you have no more authority over me than you have over the president of the United States."

"You think I haven't, eh?"

'I know you have not," said our hero, firmly.

"Then you'll find yourself mistaken, my lad; that's all about it."

"As long as I am obliged to remain on board, I am a passenger, and claim to be treated as such."

"Then suppose you pay your fare," said Captain Brandon, with a malicious smile.

"I can't do it, and I don't feel bound to, for I didn't want to come."

"You're mighty independent," sneered the captain; "and I have no doubt it will suit you excellently to get your board and passage for nothing. But I may have something to say to that."

"What will Mr. Fairchild say when I don't come back?" said Harry, in a troubled voice, rather to himself than with the expectation of an answer.

Captain Brandon laughed.

"He'll think you have run away."

"Yes, I suppose he will," said Harry, disturbed.

"Of course he will."

"And what will my mother think?" resumed Harry, sorrowfully.

"Oh, she'll think you've been led away, and got into some scrape or other," said the captain, lightly. "However, she'll see you again in eighteen months, that is, if we have a fair voyage."

"Eighteen months!" repeated our hero, in dismay.

"Yes, it's a long ways to China. You'll be quite a sailor by the end of that time."

"I don't intend to be a sailor," said Harry.

"Don't say that again, you impudent young scoundrel. Do you think I will let my cabin-boy address me in that style?"

"I am not your cabin-boy," said Harry, indignantly.

"That's your mistake. You've got to work your passage. I shan't allow any skulkers aboard this ship."

This speech, as well as most of the captain's, was garnished with oaths, which I choose to omit, though at the risk of conveying an inadequate idea of his

brutality and coarseness. Our hero was greatly exasperated at the mean plot which had been concocted against him, and being of a fearless temperament would have given full and free expression to his indignation, and a scene of violence would no doubt have resulted, but for the opportune entrance of Mr. Weldon, the supercargo.

Mr. Weldon was a young man, not over twenty-five, a nephew of the owner of the vessel, and had been sent out as supercargo, with the intention of remaining in China for two or three years in a branch establishment of his uncle's house. On account of his connection with the firm by whom he was employed, Captain Brandon found it prudent to treat him with more respect than in ordinary circumstances he would have paid to the supercargo.

"Good-morning, Captain Brandon," said the young man.

"Good-morning, Mr. Weldon," said Brandon, smoothing his face, and lowering his arm, which had been raised to strike Harry. "How do you feel this morning?"

"Not sea-sick as yet; but I don't know how soon

it may be on. I am in no hurry for it, I can assure you. But who is this young gentleman?"

"You are joking, Mr. Weldon," said the captain. "We don't usually address cabin-boys as young gentlemen on board ship."

"Is he your cabin-boy?" asked Weldon, in surprise; for Harry was not, it will be remembered, dressed in sailor rig.

"No, I am not," said Harry, boldly.

"Shut up!" said the captain, sharply, with a threatening look. "He's a headstrong young rascal, whom his friends have placed in my charge, with intentions to make a sailor of him."

"That is not true. I was trapped on board this vessel," said our hero.

"I used a little stratagem, knowing that I would have trouble otherwise," said the captain, who would not have deigned any explanation to any other than the nephew of his employer, in whose estimation he wished to stand well. "But now he's on board, I shall carry out the wishes of his friends, and he will find it for his interest not to make any trouble," he

added, with a significant look directed towards our hero.

At this moment the captain was summoned to the deck, and Harry found himself alone with the supercargo.

"Mr. Weldon," said our hero, suddenly, making up his mind to secure the young man as a friend if possible, "do you go with us to China?"

"Yes, my boy."

"Will you be my friend?"

Such an appeal, coming from a frank, manly boy, was not easily to be resisted.

Mr. Weldon took the hand so frankly offered, and said: —

"I will be your friend. I believe you are a good boy."

"Don't believe what Captain Brandon has told you. It is absolutely false. I never saw or heard of him till two days since, and he does not know any of my friends. He induced me to come on board this ship on false pretences, and I think must have given me something to make me sleep, for I became

sleepy at once, and have slept, as he tells me, ever since yesterday noon."

"This is a strange story. What can be his object?"

"I don't know that; but he has got me into his power, and I need a friend."

"What is your name?"

"Harry Raymond."

"Then, Harry," said the young man, warmly pressing his hand, "I will be that friend. If what you say is true, you have been badly treated. I think I have some influence over Captain Brandon, for he is in the employ of my uncle's firm. That influence shall be exerted in your favor."

"Thank you, Mr. Weldon," said Harry, gratefully.

"I wish you would tell me a little more about yourself that I may understand your position fully If the captain comes down, you can suspend your story till another time."

"First. I want to ask your advice on one point," said Harry.

"What is that?"

"The captain claims that I must work my passage as cabin-boy. What shall I do?"

"Have you a great objection to the duties of a cabin-boy?"

"I would not have come on board the vessel of my own free will. I don't like to be forced into going in such a position."

"That is a natural feeling; but I am not sure whether it will not be best to yield in the present instance. A captain on board of his own vessel is a monarch, and has almost supreme power. This is very often abused; but I suppose it is necessary that he should possess it. I don't know what sort of a man this Captain Brandon is; but you had better not needlessly provoke him. Besides, I suppose you wish to be earning something, and, as cabin-boy, you will be entitled to wages."

"Suppose the captain should ill-treat me?"

"I will stand your friend," said the supercargo, earnestly.

"Then," said Harry, after a moment's thought, "I will not oppose the captain's wishes. I will do my duty, but I won't submit to be imposed upon."

The entrance of the captain at this point prevented our hero from communicating the details of his story to his new friend.

CHAPTER XX.

HARRY GETS INTO TROUBLE.

Captain Brandon entered the cabin, carrying under his arm a cabin-boy's suit.

"It's time you entered upon your duties," he said. "Put on these clothes."

He expected a renewal of Harry's remonstrances; but our hero had made up his mind what to do. It was no use crying over spilt milk. Since he was on board the Sea Eagle, however much against his will, he would make the best of a disagreeable position. He had confidence in the judgment and friendship of the supercargo, whom he liked, notwithstanding their brief acquaintance, and he resolved to accept the situation, and do his best in it. When, therefore, the captain held out the cabin-boy's suit, Harry took it quietly, asking: —

"Where shall I put it on?"

"You can put it on here," said the captain,

looking at him curiously. Remembering the state of fiery indignation which our hero displayed a few minutes before, he was not prepared for this quiet acquiescence.

"So you've changed your mind, have you?" he asked.

"No, Captain Brandon," answered Harry, firmly. "I have been treacherously entrapped on board this vessel, and I remain here against my will; but as long as I stay I may as well have something to do. I will act as cabin-boy, and shall expect to receive a cabin-boy's wages."

"Well, I'm glad you've turned sensible," said Brandon. "It would have been the worse for you if you hadn't."

"I don't intend to deceive you as to my intentions, Captain Brandon," continued Harry, boldly. "I mean to leave this ship the first chance I get."

"That won't be very soon," sneered Brandon; "as I don't expect to stop anywhere till I reach China. If you want to leave me there, I shan't take any great pains to catch you."

By this time Harry had changed his clothes, and had all the appearance of a young sailor.

"Now go and report yourself to the mate," said Captain Brandon.

Harry left the cabin, and went up on deck. He saw and recognized the man to whom the captain had spoken the day before, and walked up to him.

"I believe you are the mate, sir," he said.

"Well, my lad, and who are you? The new cabin-boy?"

"Yes, sir. The captain ordered me to report to you."

"Tom Patch!" said the mate, calling one of the sailors near by.

Tom Patch came forward, hitching up his pants, as he advanced with a regular sailor's roll. He had a short, square-built figure, and a face bronzed by exposure to the suns of every clime. But his expression was honest and intelligent, not brutish and stupid, as is the case with many who have followed the sea for years without rising above the position of a common sailor.

"Show him his bunk, Patch, and break him in."

"Ay, ay, sir," said Patch, turning to Harry, whom he surveyed with interest.

"Come with me, my lad," he said.

They descended into the forecastle, where Harry was assigned a bunk near that of the sailor under whose care he had been placed.

"You're a green hand, I reckon, my lad," said Tom.

"Yes," said our hero.

"Well, I'm glad you're going to sea. I don't see how folks can be contented to live on shore."

"Do you mean that?" asked Harry, rather amused.

"Of course I do."

"Then I don't agree with you. I'd rather be on land."

"Mayhap you've been seasick. You'll get over it soon, and then you'll find it jolly."

"No, I have not been sick; but I don't like the sea."

"Then what brought you here?" said Tom, in natural wonder.

"Captain Brandon. He served me a mean trick."

"Avast there, my lad!" said Tom, lowering his voice, and looking around him significantly. "It aint best to talk ag'in the cap'n, leastways so he can hear."

"I'm not afraid," said our hero, firmly. "I told him so myself."

"What's that?" asked Tom, incredulously.

"I told Captain Brandon he had served me a mean trick."

"And he knocked you down with a belaying-pin?" suggested Tom.

"No, he didn't," said Harry, quietly.

"Then you got off easy. Better not say it ag'in, my lad."

"It's true."

"Never mind that. It aint best to tell the truth at all times. You shall spin me the yarn some time when we are snugly stowed away out of earshot, my lad. Now we must go to work."

Harry accompanied Tom to the deck, and his experience as a sailor commenced.

I do not propose to give a detailed account of what these duties were, as this does not profess to

be a sea-story, and will touch the sea only so far as it may prove necessary to make Harry's position understood. Days passed away, and in accordance with the resolution he had formed our hero attended strictly to duty. Being a smart boy, he very soon mastered the details of his duties, and discharged them in such a manner that no fault could justly be found with him. But Captain Brandon continued to view him with an eye of suspicion. He had not forgotten nor forgiven the bold and defiant manner in which Harry had expressed himself when he first realized that he had been entrapped on board the Sea Eagle. He blamed himself now that he had not inflicted a humiliating punishment upon Harry at the time, and he carefully scrutinized his conduct in order to find a pretext for paying off the old score.

But Harry thus far gave him no opportunity. He had not made any complaints against the captain to any one except Tom Patch, to whom he told his whole story, winning the stout-hearted sailor's sympathy and friendship. Thus Harry felt that he had one friend on the vessel; nay, two, for the super-

cargo, of whom mention has already been made, had by no means forgotten the promise he made to our hero to be his friend. He frequently approached him when at work, and conversed with him in a pleasant manner, as with an equal, never putting on an air of condescension, as some in his position would have done.

This intimacy and evident good feeling between the supercargo and our hero, Captain Brandon saw with dissatisfaction. He had tried to cultivate an intimacy with Mr. Weldon himself, from motives of policy, on account of his relationship to the owner of the ship, and the probability that he would some day be himself a member of the firm; but it had not taken the supercargo long to ascertain the real character of the captain, in which he found very little to attract him. So, though he treated Captain Brandon with scrupulous civility, there was a coolness in his manner which effectually precluded any degree of intimacy. The captain saw this and chafed at it. It humiliated him, yet he could not resent it. The young man was studiously polite and respectful, and gave him no cause for complaint.

But he saw that his ceremonious politeness melted away when he spoke to Harry Raymond, whom he addressed in a cordial, kindly manner which bespoke friendship. Captain Brandon brooded over this, being of a jealous, suspicious temper, and resolved, on the first occasion that presented itself, to take vengeance upon Harry, and thus at once gratify his dislike for our hero and the supercargo.

There was another member of the ship's crew whom it will be necessary to introduce.

This was Jack Rodman, a boy somewhat older than Harry, and as different from our hero as can well be imagined. He was coarse, ignorant, and vicious, and could swear with as great fluency as any sailor twice his age. He made at first some approaches to intimacy with our hero, but Harry was too disgusted with what he had seen of him to care much about striking up a friendship. On this account Jack bore a grudge against our hero, and would have played some mischievous trick upon him but for Tom Patch's evident friendship for Harry. Jack was afraid of the stout sailor, and

felt compelled to effect his object in an underhand manner.

Among the peculiarities of Captain Brandon's appearance was a very long nose, which, however useful it might be to the owner, was far from ornamental. Brandon was aware of the prominence of this feature, and felt sensitive about it. As a boy he had been annoyed by the jocose allusions of his school-fellows to it, and nothing disturbed his temper more now than any reference to it, or even a significant glance at it. Jack Rodman had observed this peculiarity in the captain, and determined to take advantage of it in order to get Harry into trouble.

One night, unobserved as he supposed, he drew with a piece of chalk a rude caricature of the captain's face, in a part of the vessel where it would be likely to be seen by Brandon. The size of the nose was exaggerated, but there was also in the other features a general resemblance to the captain, so that it was quite evident who was meant.

Jack supposed that he was unobserved, and so he

might have been but for the accidental approach of the supercargo.

Mr. Weldon glanced at what Jack was doing, and a smile came to his face. He was rather amused by the caricature, and, having no very particular regard for the captain, passed on in silence, not feeling called upon to interfere.

The next morning Captain Brandon, in pacing the deck, suddenly came face to face with the caricature, which had not been effaced.

Instantly the blood rushed to his face. He could see the resemblance himself; and that made the matter worse. He felt that it was an insult to him, and he determined to visit condign punishment upon the perpetrator of the insulting joke, if he could find him out.

"Who did this?" he roared out, at the top of his voice.

The vehemence of his tone attracted general attention. The sailors looked at one another, and exchanged sly glances indicative of amusement.

"Who did this?" exclaimed the captain, again, stamping in rage.

Nobody answered.

"Why don't you answer, some of you?" continued the angry captain. "Point out the man, and I'll flog him till he can't stand."

Even this inducement was not sufficient to extract the name of the culprit.

Captain Brandon resolved to use other means.

"I'll give five dollars to the man who'll tell me who drew this figure."

Jack Rodman came on deck just as this offer was made. His eyes sparkled with joy. He not only had it in his power to get Harry into trouble, but he would be rewarded for doing it. This was more than he had bargained for, but Jack reflected that the money would be very acceptable to him when he got on shore.

"I know who did it, Captain Brandon," he said, touching his hat.

"Ah!" said the captain, turning towards Jack. "Tell me at once, then."

"*He* did it," said Jack, pointing out Harry, who, like the rest, was an interested spectator of the scene.

"Did *he* do it?" growled Brandon, looking menacingly at our hero.

"Yes, I saw him do it."

"When did he do it?"

"Last evening."

By this time Harry, who had been struck dumb by the suddenness of the accusation, and the evident malice of Jack, recovered himself, and said boldly: —

"Captain Brandon, that is a lie, and Jack Rodman knows it is. I know nothing of the figure, and had nothing to do with it."

"I saw you do it," said Jack, with a malicious grin.

"I have no doubt he did it," said the captain, furiously. "Strip him, and we'll give him a taste of the lash."

CHAPTER XXI.

AN UNEXPECTED VICTORY.

The captain's order was a general one, and addressed to no one in particular. The sailors stood still, therefore, till the captain exclaimed again, stamping fiercely: —

"Seize him, I say, and strip him."

With a grin of enjoyment Jack Rodman started forward, and prepared to obey the captain's command. He expected to be supported by others of the crew, but found himself alone. Still he was taller and stouter than Harry, and felt confident of an easy victory over him.

When our hero saw him approach, he said, in a cool, collected manner, by no means intimidated by the prospect of a conflict with his superior in size: —

"Stand off, Jack Rodman, if you know what's good for yourself!"

"What can you do?" sneered Jack; and he gave a glance at the captain for encouragement.

"Give him a thrashing!" said the captain, anticipating with pleasure the utter discomfiture of Harry, who, so far as appearances went, was decidedly the weaker of the two. But appearances are sometimes deceitful, and Jack Rodman would not have been by any means so confident of an easy victory, had he been aware that our hero, as previously stated, was no mean proficient in the art of self-defence, having been initiated in the science of boxing by a young man from New York, who spent a summer in Vernon.

"A ring! a ring!" shouted the sailors. "Let 'em have it out!"

No opposition being made by the officers, the crew at once formed a ring round the two combatants. A few of the more generous sympathized with the "little one," as they called Harry; but with the majority there was no particular sentiment, except a desire to see the fight, with no preference for either party. Prominent in the ring was Tom Patch, Harry's friend. His honest, bronzed face was shadowed by anxiety, for he, like the rest, had no doubt

that Harry would get whipped. He longed to have a part in the fray, and take his side by his young friend; but that, of course, could not be allowed.

"It's a shame," he muttered. "It aint a fair match. Jack's twenty pounds heavier than the little one."

"Let 'em fight it out! Who cares which gets whipped?" said the next sailor.

"I do," said Tom. "The little fellow's a good one, and I don't believe he made the figger."

"Silence, men!" exclaimed the captain, in an authoritative voice. "Pitch into him, boy, and mind you give him a sound flogging, or you'll get one yourself."

Jack did not need to be urged on. He had an unreasoning and unreasonable hatred to our hero, whom he instinctively felt to be his superior in every way but one, though he did not choose to acknowledge it; that was in physical strength, in which he felt confident that he excelled Harry. He accordingly advanced in a blustering way, confident of an easy victory, swinging his fists in an unscientific way.

Harry awaited his approach calmly, quietly put-

"Let 'em fight it out."

ting himself in the proper attitude of defence. With his fists doubled up, prepared for action, and one foot advanced before the other, he stood, watching warily the demonstrations of his antagonist. Jack did not comprehend the meaning of this preparation, and continued to advance with rash confidence in his own prowess. He made a fierce lunge at our hero, not taking care to protect himself against assault. The consequence was, that while Harry parried the blow with one hand, with the other he planted a smart return blow in Rodman's face, which, striking his nose, drew blood.

There was a shout of applause, mingled with surprise, at this unexpected turning of the tables.

"Good for you!" "I bet on the little one!" "He's got pluck!" was heard from the sailors.

Perhaps the most astonished person on deck was Jack Rodman himself. Evidently he had made some mistake in his calculations. He had gone in for an easy victory, and expected that his first blow would prove a crusher. But, instead of this, his own nose was bleeding, and his small antagonist stood facing him, as cool and composed as if, instead of being an

actor in the contest, he had only been an indifferent spectator.

How did it all happen? That was what puzzled Jack. He took a fresh look at Harry, to make sure that he was right in his first impression, as to his inferior size and strength.

"Give it to him, Jack! Don't let him get the best of you!" called out a backer.

"No, I won't," growled Jack. "I'll chaw him up."

Our hero listened to this threat without being discomposed. He had made a critical survey of his antagonist, and formed an estimate of his ability. He saw that Jack was his superior in strength, and if they should come to a close contest that he would get the worst of it. But he saw also that of scientific fighting Jack knew nothing. His course was to keep him at arm's length, and conduct the contest on scientific principles.

Jack rushed in again with the same headlong precipitation as before, and his reception was about the same as before. This time our hero planted a blow in his left eye, which caused Jack to stagger back

with a howl of dismay and rage. By this time his blood was up, and he was driven on by a kind of blind fury, aggravated by the mortification he experienced at being worsted by a smaller boy in presence of the ship's crew. His reputation was at stake. He knew that if he retired from the contest defeated, he would never hear the last of it. A coward and a bully by nature, he never would have made the first attack, had he anticipated that Harry would prove so powerful an antagonist; but now he was in for it his blood was up, and he determined, as the boys say, "to go in and win."

He made another furious dash, and tried hard to seize Harry around the middle, when he would have found it an easy task, in consequence of his superior strength, to throw him down, and take vengeance upon him for the personal damages he had already received. But our hero understood very well his purpose, and braced himself for what he instinctively felt would be the final contest. He eluded the grasp of his furious adversary, and planted two blows quick as lightning, one in his breast, the other in his face. While Jack was staggering under them, he gathered

up his strength, and put it all into one final blow, which finished the work effectually. Jack fell on deck heavily, and so bewildered was he that he lay there motionless, and did not at first attempt to rise.

This quite turned the tide in favor of our hero. Sailors admire pluck, especially when it is shown by a little fellow contending against odds. There was a chorus of approving exclamations, expressed in the characteristic sailor dialect, and Harry, standing in the centre of the ring, his face flushed with the excitement of the contest, was transformed in the eyes of all into a hero. The most delighted of all was Tom Patch, who swung his hat, and called out for three cheers for the victor. The result was the more gratifying to him, because wholly unexpected. The supercargo, also, standing aloof from the ring, had witnessed the contest, and his sympathies also had been with our hero, for he had already formed an opinion far from favorable of Jack Rodman, whom he had another reason for not liking.

But there was one to whom the result of the contest was in the highest degree unsatisfactory. This

was Captain Brandon. He had been far from anticipating such a denouement, and a frown gathered on his face.

"Get up, and try it again!" he said to Jack.

But Jack Rodman had had enough of it. The last five minutes had enlightened him considerably on the subject of Harry's prowess, and he did not care to trust himself again in his hands. Besides, his nose was damaged, and his eye swollen, and he felt decidedly worse for the exercise he had just taken. Accordingly he intimated that he did not feel very well, and positively refused to renew the fight.

"All right!" growled Captain Brandon. "I've got an account to settle with the boy myself. He may not get off so easily out of my hands. Men, go back to your work."

At the captain's word of command the ring was broken, and the sailors returned to the duties which had been interrupted by the contest that has just been described.

"Now, you young rascal," said Captain Brandon, menacingly, "what did you mean by that —— pic-

ture?" filling up the blank with an oath, with which I do not choose to soil this page.

"I have already told you, Captain Brandon," said Harry, firmly, "that I had nothing to do with the drawing."

"It's a lie!" said the captain, hoarsely.

"It's the truth," repeated Harry, glancing composedly at the face of Captain Brandon, distorted with rage.

"Do you dare to contradict me?" exclaimed the captain, furiously.

"I contradict no one," said Harry. "I only say that I had nothing to do with that picture. I did not see it till this morning, a short time before you charged me with it."

"Your lie shan't save you!" exclaimed Captain Brandon. "I'll take you in hand myself, and we'll see who'll come off best."

Harry turned pale. He knew that he was no match for a grown man, and he saw that in the present state of the captain's temper he was likely to suffer severely. That he should dread the treatment he was likely to receive was only natural, but he

showed no outward fear, save in the paleness of his cheeks. He stood manfully, with his lips compressed, waiting for the attack. But help came to him from an unexpected quarter.

"Stop one moment, Captain Brandon!" said the supercargo, and there was a tone of authority in the young man's voice.

The captain turned.

"Mr. Weldon," he said, "this is no affair of yours I will thank you to attend to your own business."

"Captain Brandon, you are about to punish this boy for nothing."

"Do you call that nothing?" asked the captain, indicating the caricature.

"He had no hand in it."

"So he says."

"He tells the truth."

"Perhaps you can tell me who drew it, then?" sneered the captain.

"I can."

For one moment the captain thought that the supercargo might himself have been implicated; but he saw that this was absurd.

"Who did it, then?"

"The boy he was fighting with, — Jack Rodman."

"Are you sure of this?" demanded the captain, in amazement.

"Yes; I saw him myself engaged upon it last evening. I would not have betrayed him, had he not tried to implicate an innocent party."

Captain Brandon knew not what to think. He could not doubt the supercargo's word after this positive statement, nor could he proceed to punish Harry for a fault which, as it appeared, he had not committed. Yet, strange as it may appear, he felt more incensed against Harry, who was proved to be innocent, than against Jack Rodman, whom he knew to be guilty. He could not help wishing that he had not been told the truth of the matter until he had inflicted punishment upon our hero.

In return for the supercargo's explanation, he did not reply a word, but, turning on his heel, descended the companion-way to the cabin, where he kept himself for the next two or three hours. After he had left the deck, Harry went up to the supercargo, and in a frank way said: —

"I cannot tell you, Mr. Weldon, how much I am obliged to you for coming to my defence."

"I told you I would stand your friend when you stood in need of one." said the young man, kindly. "I am thankful that I was able to do it so effectually."

He took Harry's hand and pressed it warmly. Our young hero felt, with a thrill of thankfulness, that he had at least one good friend on board the Sea Eagle; two, in fact, for Tom Patch he knew would stand by him through thick and thin.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN SUSPENSE.

We must now go back to Vernon, and inquire how Mrs. Raymond is getting on, while Harry is each day drifting further and further away from home.

Harry's first and only letter from the city has already been given. It brought comfort and a degree of hopefulness to his mother. She felt that she could bear her solitude better if Harry was doing well. A few years, and they might be together again, as he anticipated; perhaps living in New York. In the mean time, he must come home once a month at least. Then his letters would, no doubt, be frequent.

Two days passed, however, and no letter. She began to get anxious, but reflected that Harry probably had a great deal to do. Still it was not like him to neglect her. He was too thoughtful and considerate a boy for that.

Two days more passed, and still no letter. Mrs. Raymond now become very anxious. She had about made up her mind to go up to the city herself, though she could ill spare the money needful for the trip, when she met Squire Turner in the street, on the way home from the post-office.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Raymond," he said, graciously; "what do you hear from Harry? I am told he has gone to the city to seek his fortune."

Mrs. Raymond was glad to have some one to whom she could impart her anxiety.

"I am feeling very anxious about him," she said. "I received a letter from Harry four days ago, just after he reached New York, and I have heard nothing since."

"No doubt he is very busy," said the squire.

"He would not be too busy to write me a few lines. He would know that I should feel anxious," said Mrs. Raymond.

"Don't feel troubled, Mrs. Raymond. I know now it is with boys. They dislike writing letters. It was the way with me when I was a boy."

She shook her head.

"It isn't the way with Harry," she said. "He knows too well how lonely I am without him, and how much I depend upon hearing from him."

"Perhaps he has written, and the letter has mis carried. Letters often do. I have it happen frequently."

"It may be," said Mrs. Raymond, with momentary relief. "I wish I was sure of it. He is my only boy, Squire Turner. If anything should happen to him, it would break my heart."

Knowing full well the wicked plot he had contrived against this poor woman's peace and happiness, Squire Turner felt a momentary thrill of compunction at what he had done. But his innate selfishness soon conquered this feeling. He had too many reasons for wishing Harry away, to sympathize with his mother.

"Very likely you'll get a letter to-night," he said.

"If not, I shall go to the city to-morrow morning," said Mrs. Raymond. "I am afraid something has happened to Harry."

Here was a chance for Squire Turner to make what would be regarded as a friendly offer.

"Mrs. Raymond," he said, "it will be quite an undertaking for you to go to the city, not to mention the expense, which will, of course, be a consideration with you. I was thinking of going there myself one day next week, but as you are feeling anxious about Harry, I will change my plans, and go to-morrow. I will hunt up your son, and bring you home full particulars about him. I don't think, however, you need to feel anxious."

"O Squire Turner, will you, indeed?" said the poor woman, gratefully. "You are very kind, and I shall feel it as a great favor."

"Certainly; it will give me great pleasure to oblige you. If you have anything to send him, I will carry it with pleasure."

"If it wouldn't be too much trouble, I will ask you to carry a pair of stockings I have just footed for him. And will you tell him to be sure to change his stockings if he gets his feet wet?"

"I will, with pleasure, carry any message. But why not write a note and send by me?"

"I think I will, if you will be so kind as to carry it."

"Oh, don't mention it! I hope, Mrs. Raymond, you will regard me as a near friend. If you will write the letter in the course of the day, I will send James round after supper to get it."

"I am afraid it will be too much trouble for your son."

"Not at all, not at all," said Squire Turner, cordially.

Mrs. Raymond parted from the squire, feeling more favorably disposed towards him than ever before. To confess the truth, he had never been much of a favorite of hers. His cold, disagreeable manners, and his general reputation as a hard, close-fisted man, had repelled not only her, but people generally. But now he seemed wonderfully thawed out. He was actually genial and cordial, and the manner in which he had entered into her feelings about Harry, and his kind offer to go to the city on a day he had not intended, produced a strong impression upon her mind.

"I didn't think Squire Turner could be so kind," she said to herself. "I have done him injustice. He has a good heart, after all."

"James," said Squire Turner, at the supper-table that evening, "I want you to go over to Mrs. Raymond's, directly after supper."

"What for?" asked James.

"I am going to New York to-morrow morning, and have agreed to carry a letter and small parcel to her son Harry."

James turned up his nose.

"Why don't she come to the house, and bring it, then?" he asked.

"I promised to send you."

"I don't want to be Mrs. Raymond's errand-boy. Harry Raymond is a low upstart, and I shouldn't think you would be willing to carry bundles for him."

"That is my business," said Squire Turner, who, but for private reasons, might have shared his son's objections.

"I've got a headache," said James. "I don't feel like going out."

His father understood very well that this was not true. Still he had always been in the habit of humoring James in his whims, and now, instead of exerting

his rightful authority as a parent to secure obedience, he condescended to conciliate him.

"If you have a headache," he said, "the fresh air may do you good. Go as quick as you can, and when you come back I will give you a dollar."

This argument, addressed to his son's selfishness, prevailed. James had seen at the village store a new fishing-pole, which he desired to buy, and with the promised reward he could do so.

"Can't you give me the money now?" he asked. "There's something I want to buy at the store, on the way."

"You'll have to go there after you return," said the squire, who at once saw that this was the best way of securing a prompt return.

James took his cap and started for the cottage of the Widow Raymond.

"The old man's getting mighty obliging," he muttered to himself, meaning, of course, his father, by the not very respectable term used. "I should be too proud, if I were he, to carry bundles to that pauper, Harry Raymond. Anyhow, I get a dollar by the operation, and that's something."

Arrived at the cottage, James knocked sharply at the outer door. It was opened almost immediately by Mrs. Raymond herself.

"Good-evening, James," she said, courteously. "Won't you walk in?"

"Can't stop," said James. "I'm in a great hurry. Have you got that note ready you wanted to send to the city?"

"I'll get it in a moment. But you had better step in."

"No, I can't," said James, not taking the trouble to acknowledge the invitation. "I am in a great hurry."

Mrs. Raymond went back into her sitting-room, and speedily reappeared with the note and the pair of stockings wrapped in a brown paper.

"I am sorry to trouble you with this parcel," she said. "Your father was so kind as to offer to carry it."

"Umph!" muttered James, ungraciously.

"I am much obliged to him, and to you also for your trouble in coming around for it."

James did not deign a reply, but, turning his back,

marched off, feeling that he would rather have carried a bundle for any one than for Harry Raymond. If he could have known that at this very moment the boy whom he hated so intensely was speeding away from America, doing the duties of a sailor-boy, he would have felt compensated for the disagreeable nature of the favor he was so unwillingly doing.

Squire Turner went to the city the next day, as he proposed. He went round to the office in Nassau Street, temporarily occupied by Lemuel Fairchild, the address having been communicated to him by Mrs. Raymond, though this was hardly necessary, as Hartley Brandon had apprised him by letter of the details of the plot which they had mutually arranged. Of course he found it locked, and the tenant gone. The great commission house of Fairchild & Co. had mysteriously disappeared. In order to have something to report, he called at the next room.

"Can you tell me," he asked, "whether Mr. Fairchild still occupies the adjoining room?"

"No," was the reply; "he only occupied it for a week, and then left. I understand that he left without paying his rent."

"Indeed!" said Squire Turner; "that surprises me. I understood that he was at the head of a large and responsible business house."

The other laughed.

"If you had seen him, you would soon have corrected your mistake. He was a seedy adventurer. I don't believe he was worth twenty-five dollars in the world."

"Indeed!" repeated the squire; "I am concerned to hear this. The fact is, the son of one of my neighbors — a widow — came to the city to enter his employ. One letter has been received from him, but no other. His mother is feeling very anxious. How long since they vacated the room?"

"I have not seen him for four or five days."

"Did you see anything of the boy?"

"Yes; I saw a boy here last Monday, and on Tuesday morning, but not since. Fairchild was here for a few minutes in the afternoon; but he, too, has been absent from that time."

"Really this looks suspicious. What would you advise me to do?" asked Squire Turner, with an appearance of concern.

"Lay the matter before the police authorities. Most likely this Fairchild is a swindler, and they may know something about him. I know of nothing else to advise."

"Thank you. I believe I will follow your advice. Good-morning."

"Good-morning, sir."

Squire Turner decided in reality to follow his recommendation. Nothing was better adapted to clear him personally of any suspicions of having had a hand in Harry's abduction, in the improbable contingency of such suspicion being aroused. Besides this, he was founding a claim to Mrs. Raymond's gratitude, which might lead her hereafter to regard his suit with favor, in case he should find it politic to seek her in marriage. He accordingly called at the police head-quarters, and laid the case before the authorities, taking care, however, not to be explicit, as he had no wish to have Fairchild actually arrested.

He also called at the office of a morning paper, and, obtaining copies for the last three or four days,

read, with satisfaction, the record of the Sea Eagle's sailing.

"Now," he thought to himself, "the field is clear, and I can carry out my plans without interruption."

CHAPTER XXIII.

SEEKING FOR HARRY.

Squire Turner arrived in Vernon in time for a late supper. After partaking of it, he took his hat and cane, and walked round to Mrs. Raymond's cottage. Seeing him from the window, she hastened to open the door, and gazed with a look of anxious inquiry into his face.

"Did you see Harry?" she asked quickly, forgetting in her anxiety for her son even to bid the squire good-evening.

"No, Mrs. Raymond; but I will come in and tell you all about it."

His face was grave, and his voice was sympathetic. The poor woman, her heart full of a terrible anxiety, haunted by undefined fears, led the way into the plain sitting-room, and then said, in a voice of entreaty, "Tell me quick, Squire Turner, has anything happened to my boy?"

"Let us hope not, Mrs. Raymond. I assure you I know of no harm that has come to him, but — I could not find him."

"You forgot the number?" she inquired, eagerly.

"No, I remembered the number. Besides, it was on your letter and bundle. But I find that Mr. Fairchild has moved from his office on Nassau Street."

"Has moved — where?"

"That I could not learn. It seems that the office was closed the day after your son's arrival in New York, that is, on Tuesday. I made inquiry of the occupant of the next office, but that was all he could tell me, except that he believed Mr. Fairchild had gone away without paying his rent."

Mrs. Raymond looked surprised.

"I don't understand it," she said. "Harry wrote that he was doing a large business. I thought the firm was one of the largest in New York."

"Let us hope that the information I received was incorrect," said the squire. "We will suppose that Mr. Fairchild found it necessary to move, on account of the demands of an extensive business. The office

on Nassau Street was a small one, and I should hardly suppose it would be adequate to his wants."

"But Harry said nothing about moving. Besides, if they did move, I should think he would have written me since."

"There is something in what you say," the squire answered. "In fact, I confess the affair has puzzled me. It is possible, however, as I suggested the other day, that he may have written, and the letter miscarried."

"Do you think anything has happened to Harry, Squire Turner?" asked Mrs. Raymond.

"I hope not."

"But you think it possible?"

"I don't know what could have happened."

"But it seems suspicious, Mr. Fairchild's moving away so quickly."

"Yes, that does look suspicious," admitted the squire. "In fact, I thought it best to lay the matter before the police authorities, so that if there is anything wrong they may ferret it out."

"Oh, I wish that Harry had never gone to the city!" murmured Mrs. Raymond, sorrowfully. "I

was not in favor of it from the first. I tried to have him stay at home, but he was possessed to go to the city."

"It is natural, Mrs. Raymond, that a spirited boy should get tired of a small village like Vernon, and want to enter a larger field. It may turn out all right. Don't decide too hastily that anything has happened to him."

"I shall not sleep any to-night. Squire Turner, I think I must go to the city to-morrow."

"I would not advise you to do so, Mrs. Raymond. You could do no good there. I have placed the matter in the hands of the police authorities, and whatever there is to be found out they will ascertain and communicate to me."

"But it seems so hard to wait in suspense."

"That is true. I will tell you what I will do. I know your anxiety, and if nothing should be heard before next Tuesday, I will go to the city again, and make what additional inquiries I can."

"Thank you, Squire Turner. You are truly kind. How can I ever repay you for your great kindness?"

"Don't mention it, Mrs. Raymond. I know you

have no one to look out for you now, and it is a pleasure to me to feel that I am able to be of service."

The squire took his leave, pressing Mrs. Raymond's hand gently, to indicate the sympathy which he felt for her.

"I believe I played my part pretty well," he said to himself, as he went out. "She will never suspect that I had anything to do with the abduction of her son. When the affair has blown over a little, I will go to Milwaukie, and see Robinson about the land warrant, and its probable value. If the affair can be compromised, so as to bring Mrs. Raymond ten thousand dollars, I will offer myself. That will be a pretty addition to my property. Besides, when her son gets home, and finds that I am his mother's husband, his mouth will be shut about that confounded fire. Maybe, he will fall overboard, and never come back. If that happens, I shan't shed many tears. He is an obstinate, impracticable boy, and I shall be rid of him."

Thus the squire soliloquized.

Meanwhile, three days passed. It was Monday

evening. Again he called to see the widow, now, as it appeared, doubly bereft of husband and son.

"Have you had a letter, Mrs. Raymond?" he inquired.

"No," she answered, sorrowfully. "I hoped you might have heard something."

The squire shook his head.

"I wish I had any such news to give you," he said; "but I have heard nothing whatever."

"I am sure Harry is dead," said the poor mother, bursting into tears.

"No, no, I am sure he is not," said the squire, soothingly. "There are twenty ways of accounting for his silence, before adopting such an extreme view as this."

"I have hardly closed my eyes in sleep for the last three nights," said Mrs. Raymond; and her pale face and swollen eyes testified to the literal correctness of what she said.

"Don't worry too much," said the squire. "We shall hear of Harry yet. To-morrow I will go to the city again. If it will be any satisfaction to you, I will invite you to accompany me."

"I will go," said the poor mother. "It will be better than staying at home. I shall feel that I am doing something to find my lost Harry. You are very kind to invite me."

"Don't mention it," said the squire. "I will call round in the morning, and carry you to the depot in my carriage."

"I will be ready."

The next day, therefore, Squire Turner, accompanied by Mrs. Raymond, went to New York. They went round to the office in Nassau Street, but, as may be expected, learned nothing in addition to the facts previously gathered. Next, they went to the office of the Superintendent of Police, but learned nothing definite beyond this, that Lemuel Fairchild, instead of being a responsible business-man, was a needy adventurer. He had disappeared from the city, and thus far the police had been unable to trace him. What intention he could have had in pretending to be a commission merchant, and, above all, what could have induced him to send for Harry, was a mystery which it seemed difficult to explain. The

superintendent promised to pursue his inquiries, and to endeavor to obtain information concerning Harry and his employer, — both of whom had strangely disappeared. With this they were obliged to be content, unsatisfactory as it was.

With a heavy heart Mrs. Raymond made her homeward journey. Thus far she had thought only of the personal grief she had suffered in the loss of Harry. But another consideration very soon forced itself upon her mind. In losing Harry, she had lost her main support. How was she to sustain herself and little Katy? Already the small amount of ready money which her husband had left behind him was exhausted, and as yet she knew of no way of earning more. It was Squire Turner who first opened the subject to her.

"I have no doubt," he said, "that Harry will return after a while, and explain his absence in a satisfactory manner. But, meanwhile, you will, of course, suffer inconvenience from the loss of his wages. Have you thought of any plan?"

"No," she answered, wearily. "I have no pleas-

ure in living, now that my husband and son are gone."

"You must live for the sake of little Katy, and for the sake of Harry, who will return some day."

"Yes, Katy will need me; Harry I shall never see again."

"You think so now; but I am sure he will return. I have taken the liberty to form a plan for you, supposing that you were too much occupied by your grief to form any for yourself."

"You are very kind, Squire Turner."

"I will advance you a hundred dollars, which can be added to the mortgage I hold on your place. With a part of it you can buy a sewing-machine, and take in work. I am needing a dozen shirts made, if you will undertake them."

Mrs. Raymond felt that this was a kind and wise plan, and so expressed herself. Accordingly, the sewing-machine was bought, and it was understood that Mrs. Raymond was ready to take in sewing. She obtained considerable employment, but not enough to pay all her expenses. Every month she

found herself going behindhand, and getting more and more into debt to Squire Turner.

But we must leave her now, and follow the fortunes of our young hero.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SQUIRE TURNER'S LETTER.

The affair of the caricature was suffered to pass without the punishment of the guilty party. Had not Harry found some one to clear him of the charge, he would have fared badly from the captain's brutality, increased by his unfounded dislike. But in Jack Rodman the offence was passed over. Probably the captain suspected that the caricature had been drawn with the object of getting our hero into trouble, and that no insult was intended to himself.

It became evident to all on board that Harry was an object of dislike to the captain. Brandon never spoke to him except in a rough voice and with lowering looks, and would gladly have shown his dislike actively, but for the restraining presence of Mr. Weldon, the supercargo, whose interest in our hero daily grew stronger.

As for Harry, he did his duty faithfully, as he had determined. His position was not to his liking, and he meant to escape from it whenever an opportunity offered; but, until that time came, he thought it best to give the captain no cause of complaint. He often wondered whether Captain Brandon had invited him on board with the intention of carrying him off to sea. On this point he could not satisfy himself; for, though it certainly looked like it, he could conceive of no motive which Brandon could have for so acting. He was, as he supposed, a total stranger to him until the day before the vessel sailed. He concluded, therefore, that his detention was only accidental, but that the captain did not feel sufficient interest in him to send him on shore in time.

But a short time afterwards he made a discovery which threw a new and perplexing light upon his abduction. He was sent down into the cabin one day on an errand. While there, he saw an open letter lying upon the floor. Picking it up, with the intention of placing it on the table, he happened to see his own name about the middle of the page. In his surprise he let his eye travel over the remainder

of the letter. A light flashed upon him as he read, and, commencing at the beginning, he made himself acquainted with the whole letter. Then, because he did not dare to stay longer, he hurriedly thrust it into his pocket and went on deck.

That we may understand how far Harry was enlightened by its perusal, the letter is subjoined: —

"HARTLEY BRANDON: — Your letter, detailing the steps which you have already taken, in order to carry out the plan which I mentioned to you, is received. I approve of all you have done. The most difficult part of the programme, — getting the boy to the city, — you have ingeniously provided for. The offer of a place in the city, with a salary of twelve dollars a week, will, undoubtedly, be very tempting to an ambitions boy like Harry Raymond. Now he is employed temporarily in the village store at six dollars a week, and that situation he must soon resign. He will, undoubtedly, swallow the bait, and when you have once got him to the city, you can easily devise means for getting him on board your vessel. By the way, I congratulate you on your unexpected

accession to the post of captain. It will pay you better, and of course be more agreeable than that of mate. Besides, it will give you full power over young Raymond. If he should show signs of insubordination, which is quite possible, for he is a high-spirited boy, have no mercy upon him. Let him feel your authority. Your voyage is fortunately a long one, and by the time you return he will probably be well tamed; if not, it will be your fault.

"I do not know that I have anything more to add, except that of course you are never to mention my name to Raymond, or lead him in any way to suspect that there is any acquaintance between us. On this point I am very particular, and should I discover that you have broken your word, I should disown all knowledge of the transaction, and withhold the reward I promised. I enclose twenty-five dollars, which you say you have promised to your confederate, Lemuel Fairchild."

This was the whole of the letter. It was not signed, from motives of prudence, no doubt, for otherwise Squire Turner would have placed himself

in the power of Brandon. But Harry was not for a moment in doubt as to the name of the writer. He was familiar with the squire's handwriting, if there had not been internal evidence to show that it was written by him.

But the discovery was far from clearing up the mystery. Why should Squire Turner enter into a plot to kidnap him? Was it because Harry had been a witness of the fire, and by his testimony could prevent the squire from receiving his insurance money? This was possible. At any rate Harry could think of nothing else. Had he understood the further motives which prompted Squire Turner's action, he would have felt still more anxious than at present. Now he felt an eager wish to be at home, and confront the squire with the evidence he had obtained, as well as to prevent his obtaining money from the insurance company on false pretences, as he felt persuaded that he intended to do.

Our hero resolved to keep the letter he had accidentally discovered. It was not his, but its connection with him justified him, he thought, in retaining it. As he might be suspected of having it, he hid it

away, not wishing to have it found upon him in the event of a search. But Captain Brandon did not appear to miss it. At any rate, he made no inquiry after it, and very probably supposed that it was still in his possession.

Harry deliberated whether he should impart to any one the information he had obtained. Tom Patch was an honest fellow and a good friend, but he was an illiterate sailor, and, though he could give sympathy, his advice would be of little service. Mr. Weldon, on the other hand, had not only shown himself a friend, but he was a gentleman of education and judgment. Harry felt that he would be a safe counsellor. Accordingly, one day when a good opportunity offered, he related to the supercargo the discovery he had made, with enough of his home life to make the account intelligible.

The young man listened in surprise.

"This is a strange story, Harry," he said.

"Yes, sir, it is strange," said our hero. "I could not have believed that Squire Turner would have treated me so meanly.

"Your having seen him set fire to his house makes

it less strange. He could not draw the insurance money if you chose to interfere."

"I should have interfered," said Harry, promptly.

"You would have been right in doing so. It appears, then, that he was interested to the amount of two thousand dollars in getting you out of the way."

"Yes, sir," said our hero; "but there is one thing I can't understand."

"What is it?"

"He must have known that I would come back from the voyage, and that I should learn whether he had drawn the money. It would not be too late then to expose him."

"That is true," said the young man, thoughtfully.

"Perhaps," he said, after a little thought, fixing his eyes seriously upon Harry, "he does not expect you to come back at all."

"What do you mean, Mr. Weldon?"

"I mean this; he has already shown himself capable of one crime — he may be capable of another. Evidently he has some secret understanding with the captain, and he may have given him secret instructions, of which we are not aware."

"You don't think he would take my life?" said Harry, his brown cheek turning a little pale at the thought.

"I hope not. He might, however, leave you by design on some lonely island in the sea. At any rate, it will be necessary to be on your guard. I am very glad you have told me what you have found out. I will also be on the lookout, and if I find any danger menacing you I will let you know."

"Thank you, Mr. Weldon," said Harry, gratefully; "I am very glad to have so good a friend."

"You may depend on my friendship with confidence," said the supercargo, taking the boy's hand kindly. "I feel an interest in you, and no harm shall come to you if I can help it."

The suggestion of Mr. Weldon that possibly Squire Turner did not expect him to return was a startling one to our hero. He had lamented his necessary absence for a year or more from home, and oftentimes pictured to himself with pain the grief of his mother when she learned of his mysterious disappearance. He was afraid that she would suffer from narrow means while he was away. Still he knew that she could

raise money on the house by a further mortgage, enough probably to carry her through two years, even if she did not earn anything during this period. It would be a great pity to have her little property so sacrificed; but Harry was hopeful, and meant when he returned to make up to her for her losses. He would be home in eighteen months, as he judged from inquiries made of the sailors; at any rate in less than two years, and this thought had sustained him in his temporary separation. But now for the first time the thought came to him that he might be prevented from returning at all. Suppose it should prove true, as the supercargo suggested, that Captain Brandon should leave him on some lonely island in the ocean, there to starve, or to drag out a solitary and wretched existence, perhaps for years? This was terrible to think of, yet he had heard and read of such cases. He resolved not to be persuaded to land anywhere, except at the termination of the voyage, and thus avoid danger.

But, as often happens, the danger assumed a different shape from what he anticipated. To explain the evil which befell him, it is necessary to say that Jack

Rodman had not forgiven our hero for the signal and public manner in which he had defeated him in the contest already recorded. He cherished a malignant hatred against Harry, and longed to do him some harm. He was bound to get even with him, so he said to himself. It was some time before an opportunity presented itself. But at length one came.

Harry was leaning over the side one evening, thinking over his position, when Jack Rodman's attention was drawn to him. He looked around him hurriedly. Nobody was looking. A terrible impulse seized him. He crept stealthily behind Harry, lifted him from his feet, and in an instant threw him into the sea.

"Help!" exclaimed Harry, in loud, clear tones.

Tom Patch heard, and recognized the voice. Instantly he threw a plank overboad, calling out: —

"Keep up, my lad, and we'll help you."

The captain was just coming out of the cabin. Tom ran up to him, and hurriedly announced that Harry had fallen overboard.

"If he's careless enough to fall overboard, let him take care of himself," said the captain, coolly.

"Won't you put out a boat?" asked Tom, anxiously.

The only answer was an oath, and a savage command to go about his business.

All the while valuable time was being lost. Harry was by this time some distance astern. He had succeeded in reaching the plank, and was clinging to it.

"Poor lad!" said Tom Patch, brushing a tear from his eyes with his large and horny hand, and he breathed an anathema against the captain, which I cannot record. "He's bound for Davy Jones's locker, as sure as my name's Tom."

There seemed little chance for our hero. With nothing but a plank between him and immediate destruction, alone in the vast ocean, without a particle of food or drink to sustain him, the question of "sink or swim" seemed little in doubt.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE CAPTAIN AND THE SUPERCARGO.

When Harry was so treacherously thrown over board by Jack Rodman, the supercargo was not on deck. He had been attacked by a violent headache, which had caused him to go below and "turn in," in the hope of obtaining a little sleep. In this he at length succeeded, and when Harry's life was placed in jeopardy he was fast asleep. He did not wake up for an hour or more. Feeling refreshed he got up and went on deck. He looked round as usual for Harry, but did not see him. His attention, however, was drawn to Tom Patch, who, good, honest fellow, every now and then raised his rough hand to his eyes to brush away a tear.

"What's the matter, Tom?" asked the supercargo, for he had observed the rough sailor's partiality for Harry, and this had inclined him favorably towards him.

"Is it you, Mr. Weldon?" said Tom, in a subdued tone. "I wish you'd been on deck an hour ago."

"Why?"

"Mayhaps you could have saved the poor lad."

"Saved whom?" asked the supercargo, suspecting at once that some harm had befallen Harry, but not dreaming of the extent of his misfortune.

"He fell overboard, or was thrown over, I can't justly say which."

"Whom do you mean?"

"Harry Raymond."

"Good heavens! How long since?"

"An hour and a half, maybe."

"And was nothing done to save him?"

"I threw a plank when I heard him cry for help."

"And where was the captain when this happened?" asked Weldon, suspiciously.

"In his cabin. I went down to tell him, and ask to have a boat lowered to save the poor lad; but he swore that if he was careless enough to fall overboard he must save himself."

The supercargo was not an excitable man, but

rather mild and pacific in his disposition; but when he heard of the cold-blooded manner in which Captain Brandon had refused help to the drowning boy, he was filled with a just indignation, which he was unable to conceal.

"Where is Captain Brandon?" he asked, in a quick, stern voice, so unusual to him that Tom looked up in surprise.

"In his cabin, Mr. Weldon. He gave orders that he should not be disturbed."

"That, for his orders!" returned the supercargo, snapping his fingers contemptuously. "He *shall* be disturbed, and he shall answer to me for his atrocious inhumanity!" And Mr. Weldon hurried to the rear of the companion-way.

"I didn't think he had so much spirit," said Tom, as he followed with his glance the retreating form of the supercargo, "he's so mild-like, commonly. But I'm glad the poor lad's got some one that'll dare to speak up for him. I'd do it, but the captain'd knock me down with a marlin-spike, and put me in irons, likely, if I did."

The captain's attention was drawn to a quick, imperative knock at the door of the cabin.

"Go away!" he growled. "I do not wish to be disturbed."

The only answer was a succession of knocks still louder and more imperative.

"I'll fix him for his insolence, whoever he is," the captain muttered, angrily, and, walking to the cabin door, opened it himself.

"What do you mean, Mr. Weldon?" he demanded, in surprise and anger.

The young man's face was white with anger, and there was a suppressed fury in his tone, as he replied, "I come here, Captain Brandon, to demand why you have sacrificed a human life, by refusing to make any effort to save the boy Harry Raymond."

"I am not responsible to you for what I do or decline to do, Mr. Weldon," said Brandon, fiercely. "It is none of your business."

"It is my business, Captain Brandon, and the business of every man on board who has a spark of humanity in his bosom."

"You are insolent, sir."

"Is this a time to choose words? You have suffered that poor boy to perish when you might have saved him, and in the eyes of Heaven you are responsible for his murder."

"Murder!"

Hartley Brandon was not a brave man. He was disposed to bully and threaten, when he thought he could do it with safety; but when he was opposed in an intrepid and fearless manner, his tone became milder and he lowered his pretensions. So, in the present case, it startled him to be told that, in failing to take means for the rescue of Harry, he had been accessory to a murder, and he began to have undefined apprehensions of the possible consequences of his neglect. He thought it best to exculpate himself.

"Walk in, Mr. Weldon, and sit down," he said. "We will talk this matter over. You don't understand all the circumstances."

"I hope I do not, Captain Brandon," said the young man, gravely. "I do not wish to think so ill of you as I fear I must."

"The boy carelessly fell overboard," commenced the captain.

"Are you sure he fell?" asked the supercargo, significantly.

"Of course he fell. How else could it be? I don't understand you."

"It seems strange that he should be so careless."

"That's the way of it. He didn't deserve to be helped. Can I be expected to stop my ship every time a careless boy takes a notion to fall overboard?"

"When a human life is in jeopardy, Captain Brandon, our duty is to save it if we can. I don't envy the man who at such a time can stop to inquire whether the danger is the result of carelessness or not."

The supercargo spoke sternly, and the captain felt arraigned for his action, and this irritated him.

"I have to think of my ship," he said.

"In what way would it have injured the ship, if you had lowered the boat for Harry?"

"I cannot afford to lose time."

"Have you thought how much time the poor boy has lost, whose life is probably a sacrifice to your criminal negligence? A life which, in all probability, would have been prolonged to seventy, has been cut short at fifteen. Fifty-five years lost to save one hour in the voyage of the Sea Eagle!" said Weldon, scornfully.

"I am not responsible to you, Mr. Weldon," said Brandon, with irritation. "I acted as I thought for the best. I am the captain of this ship, not you."

"I am aware of that, Captain Brandon. But you could not expect me to stand by and see a human life sacrificed without uttering my earnest protest. Any life would be worth saving,—the life of this bright, manly boy more than most. His death lies at your door."

"You have said as much before," said the captain, sulkily. "If you have no more to say, I will trouble you to leave me to myself."

"I have something more to say," said the supercargo, regarding the captain fixedly. "I am aware

of the manner in which this boy was entrapped on board your vessel. What motive you had in carrying him away from home and friends I do not know. You perhaps know, also," the young man continued, "whether in leaving him to his sad fate you are not influenced by a similar motive."

"What do you mean, Mr. Weldon?" demanded the captain, startled by the words and tone of the other.

'I mean this: that in this whole affair there is something which I do not understand, — something that has excited my suspicions. I shall feel it my duty to report all that I know of it to the authorities at the first opportunity."

Brandon turned pale. He began to see that he had made a mistake, and exposed himself to grave suspicions. It would have been better, as he now perceived, to make a show of rescuing our hero. It would have been easy to secure failure by unnecessary delay. The threat of a legal investigation alarmed him, and he prepared to make an argument by which he might dispel, if possible, the impression which had been created in the mind of the supercargo.

But Mr. Weldon rose, and left the cabin hastily. The interview had been a most unsatisfactory one, and had only convinced him of what he feared, — that the captain was, in reality, either glad to be rid of our hero, even by such means, or else indifferent to his fate. He was inclined to believe in the former theory. What he had said of laying the matter before the authorities, he was fully decided upon. Now the vehemence of his indignation gave place to a feeling of the deepest and most poignant sorrow for the loss of the boy who had unconsciously become very dear to him. He thought of his frank, manly bearing, of his pleasant face, of his courtesy and politeness, and the warm and generous heart of which he had shown himself to be possessed, and then of the terrible fate which had so unexpectedly overtaken him, and the tears rose unbidden to his eyes. By this time, doubtless, Harry was beyond human succor, and all that he could do was to drop a tear to his memory. He went up to Tom Patch, towards whom the sailor's evident grief for our hero's fate had warmed his heart, and wrung his hand heartily.

"He was a noble boy, and his life has been shame-

fully sacrificed, Tom," he said; "but if I live, the man who has done this deed shall be punished."

"Ay, ay, sir," said Tom, whose voice was gruff with emotion; "I hope you'll stick to that. He was a brave lad, and the captain deserves to be pitched after him."

Mr. Weldon paced the deck till far into the night. Captain Brandon shut himself up in his cabin, and did not show himself till morning. He had made various advances towards the supercargo, whom he evidently desired to conciliate, from prudential intentions; but the young man met him with a freezing formality, which showed him that all hopes in that direction were futile.

So the Sea Eagle sped on its way, till at length it arrived at its destined port.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ADRIFT.

The attack made upon our hero was so sudden and so rapidly executed, that there was no opportunity for resistance. Before he well knew what had happened to him he found himself struggling in the ocean. Instinct led him to strike out. In response to his cry the plank was thrown overboard, as we know. He saw it and swam towards it. Fortunately he was an expert swimmer, and had no difficulty in reaching it.

He got upon the plank and supported himself by it. Then, for the first time, he was able to look towards the Sea Eagle. It was speeding away from him, not rapidly, for there was a light wind, but surely.

"Surely they will lower a boat for me," thought our hero, anxiously.

He had heard Tom Patch's shout of encourage-

ment, and he knew Tom would not let him perish, if he could help it. He did not suspect that the captain would be inhuman enough to refuse assistance. So he gazed anxiously, but still hopefully, at the receding ship, wondering why there was such a delay in getting out the boat. But when five minutes had elapsed, and, straining his eyes in the uncertain light, he could see no preparations going forward for a rescue, the thought flashed upon him in all its horror that he was to be left to his fate. And what a fate! Thousands of miles from home, adrift on the vast ocean, with only a plank between him and destruction. Could anything be more fearful?

At present the ocean was comparatively calm. There was little breeze, and so no high waves were excited. He could float without any great difficulty in clinging to the plank. But this could not be expected to last. To-morrow the waves might sweep him from his sole refuge, and to certain destruction. Besides, he had neither food nor drink. Even were he able to cling to the plank, hunger and thirst would soon make his condition insupportable. There was still another consideration. It would not do for him

to sleep. Should he lose consciousness, his hold of the plank would, of course, relax, and he would be drowned.

All these thoughts crowded upon our young hero, and, hero though we call him, a feeling of bitter despair came to him. Was this to be the end of all his glowing hopes and bright anticipations of future prosperity? Was he never to see his mother and his little sister Katy again? He felt at this terrible moment how he loved them both, and, anxious as he was for himself, with death staring him in the face, he could not help thinking how his death would affect these dear ones, and anxiously considered how they would be able to get along without him. When the property was gone, how would his mother get along?

"Oh, if I could but live for mother and Katy!" thought the poor boy. "I would work for them without a murmur. But it is horrible to die in the wild ocean so far away from home."

He was not troubled by drowsiness, for in the tumult of his feelings he could not have composed himself to sleep under any circumstances. His mind was preternaturally active. Now he thought of his

mother, now of his school-mates, and his happy school-days at the Vernon High School, of the many good times he had enjoyed hunting for nuts, or picking berries, or playing ball with the boys. Then he thought of Squire Turner, and wondered how he would feel when he heard of his death. Would he be glad that there was no more chance of his being exposed as the incendiary of his own building? Harry hardly knew what to think. It never occurred to him to suspect that Squire Turner was responsible for his abduction and for his present condition.

So the night wore slowly away. When the first gray streaks of dawn broke upon the ocean, the Sea Eagle was more than fifty miles away. Harry was still wakeful. His intense mental action had kept sleep at a distance.

As soon as the light had increased a little he began to look about anxiously in every direction. There was one chance of life, and he clung to that. He might be seen from some approaching vessel and picked up. This chance was small enough. The avenues of the ocean are so many and so broad, that no ship can be depended upon to keep the course of

another. What chance was there, in the brief time Harry could hope to hold out, that any vessel would come near enough for him to be seen and rescued?

But it is said that drowning men will cling to a straw, and Harry was in immediate danger of drowning. His thoughts were fixed in all their intensity upon the remote contingency of a vessel's passing. He almost forgot that he was hungry. But, as the morning advanced, the craving for food made itself unpleasantly felt. There was a gnawing at his stomach (for he had eaten but lightly the evening before), which there was no chance of appeasing. Harry knew well that this feeling would grow stronger and stronger, until it became so agonizing as to make life a burden. But there was always one relief, though a desperate one. He could release his hold of the plank, and sink down into the deep waves, which, merciless as they were, were more merciful than hunger and thirst, for while the first brings protracted agony, the last affords a speedy relief for all trouble.

After a while, thirst as well as hunger began to torment him. The salt meat, which affords the

staple of a sailor's diet, induces thirst more rapidly than ordinary food. So by noon his throat was parched with thirst. He felt the tantalizing character of his situation; "Water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink." He was half tempted to taste of the water in which he was immersed; but he knew that, so far from affording relief, it would only entail additional suffering, and, strong though the temptation was, he had the prudence and self-denial to forbear.

Then, besides, partly owing to his sleeplessness, his head began to throb with pain, and, altogether, the poor boy's situation was becoming desperate. It seemed as if his career was likely to terminate very speedily.

While our hero is in this precarious condition, we must, for a brief time, change the scene.

Sailing steadily towards him, though he knew it not, was the Australian packet-ship Rubicon, bound from Liverpool to Melbourne.

It was a pleasant day, and most of the passengers were on deck, enjoying the calm weather. Some had been seasick; but even those who were most inclined

to be disturbed by this most disagreeable of maladies, could find no good cause for keeping below on so pleasant a day. The sea was tranquil, the movement of the vessel calm and steady, and as such days are not often to be reckoned upon, the passengers determined to make the most of this.

Among the passengers were David Lindsay, a gentleman of middle age, and his daughter Maud, a bright, handsome girl of thirteen. Mr. Lindsay was a London merchant, who, partly for the benefit of his health, which had been affected by too great devotion to business, partly because he had business interests in Australia, had decided to go out to Melbourne on a visit. He had not at first proposed to take his daughter, considering her too young; but she was an only child, and, as her mother was dead, had been treated by her father more as a companion than is usual with girls of her age. So, when her father mentioned his plan, Maud at once said confidently, "Oh, that will be charming, papa! How much I shall enjoy it!"

"How much you will enjoy it," repeated her

father. "Well, Maud, I can't say that your remark is particularly complimentary to me."

"Why not?" asked Maud, innocently.

"I tell you that I am going to Australia, — a journey likely to keep me away from home a year at least, and you are so ready to part with me that you say at once that it is charming."

"But, papa," said Maud, "we shall not be separated at all."

"How do you make that out?"

"*Of course* you are going to take me with you!" and Maud put a strong emphasis on the first two words.

"You seem to be pretty confident, considering that such an idea never entered my head," said her father.

"What, papa! You don't mean to say that you thought of leaving me here in England?"

"Certainly, my child."

"But you know, papa, I can't stay away from you so long. I'm sure you're going to take me with you." And she put her arms coaxingly around his neck.

"But what is to become of your education in the mean time, Maud?"

"Oh, that can wait."

"You dispose of that difficulty very easily," said her father, amused.

"Why, you see, papa, I am not so terribly old I've got plenty of time before me, so that I can spare a year well enough. Besides, I shall be learning something from observation. My governess says that there are two great sources of instruction: one of these is the study of books; and the other, and perhaps the more valuable of the two, is the right use of the faculty of observation."

In saying this she imitated the prim, methodical tone of her governess, an elderly spinster, at whose little peculiarities Mr. Lindsay had often been secretly amused.

He laughed outright at the excellent imitation given of Miss Pendleton's manner, and Maud saw that her suit was half won.

"You ought to be a lawyer, Maud," he said, "you are so good at special pleading."

"That means that I am going, I suppose, papa?" said Maud, promptly.

"Not so fast. I have got to think it over. I must ask Miss Pendleton what she thinks of it."

"If you do, papa, will you be kind enough to repeat that remark I made about the two sources of knowledge?"

"No, Maud, I don't think I shall venture upon such a thing. However, I will take your request into consideration."

"Into a *favorable* consideration, papa."

"As to that, I cannot promise."

Maud, however, felt tolerably assured that she had gained her point, as indeed she had. Mr. Lindsay had been dreading his Australian trip mainly because it would separate him from his daughter. Now he began to look forward to it with interest and pleasure. Strange to say, the thought of taking his daughter had never before occurred to him. Yet there seemed no good reason for not doing it. She was young, and there was plenty of time to obtain an education, as she had herself said. Besides, the remark of her governess had considerable truth in it.

Observation would be a valuable source of information.

He consulted Miss Pendleton, offering her a year's vacation on half salary, and found her very ready to accept it. It was many years that she had been teaching in different families, and the prospect of a year's respite, with such pecuniary inducements as would relieve her from loss or anxiety, was a pleasant one. It would enable her to visit the family of a married sister, and renew the familiar intercourse which her mode of life for many years had rendered impracticable.

So it happened that when the packet Rubicon sailed, in the list of passengers were Mr. David Lindsay and daughter.

Mr. Lindsay was sea-sick a fortnight, Maud scarcely at all. The dismal hours in which he was a victim to this disagreeable complaint were made much less intolerable by the services and bright, cheerful companionship of his daughter, so that the merchant more than once felt thankful that he had yielded to her entreaties, and made her the companion of his trip.

Maud and her father were standing by the side of the vessel, looking out at the broad waste of waters, without any definite object in view. Suddenly Maud exclaimed, "Papa, look there, and tell me what you see!"

She pointed to the east. He shook his head. "Your eyes are better than mine, Maud," he said. "I can see nothing."

"Papa," she said, energetically, "I am sure I can see a boy in the water supported by a plank."

The captain was on deck with his spy-glass. Mr. Lindsay went up to him and told him what Maud had said. He turned his glass in the direction indicated.

"The young lady is right," he said. "It is a boy adrift upon a plank."

CHAPTER XXVII

NEW FRIENDS.

"A BOY adrift!" repeated Mr. Lindsay. "How could he get into such a situation?"

"There may have been a wreck," said the captain; "though I can see no other indications of it," as through his glass he scanned the sea in the neighborhood of Harry.

"You'll go after him, won't you, Captain Scott?" asked Maud, anxiously.

"Certainly, my dear young lady; I will save him if I can."

"It must be so terrible to be out in the sea with nothing but a plank to hold on to," said Maud, sympathetically. "I hope he'll hold on till we get there."

"He lies nearly in our course. In twenty minutes we shall reach him."

Meanwhile Harry, scanning the sea anxiously, had

caught sight of the Rubicon. A wild thrill of hope stirred his heart. Here, at last, was a chance of life. But would they see him? That was the momentous question. Had he anything by which he might attract attention?

He felt in his pocket, and drew out his handkerchief. Had it been dry, he could have waved it aloft. But it was dripping wet, and there was no wave to it. His spirits began to sink. But there was one encouragement: the packet was heading for him. Though he might not be seen now, he would perhaps be able to attract attention when the ship drew near.

Fifteen minutes passed in the most anxious suspense. How much depended on the next quarter of an hour! In that time it would be decided whether he should live or die. Already he could discern the figures of the passengers. Was it a delusion? No, a little girl was waving her handkerchief to him. He was seen,—he would be rescued! He became so weak, in the tumult of his sudden joy, that he released his hold of the plank which had been his safeguard, and, as it proved, his deliverance. But he recovered from

his weakness, and with renewed energy clung to the plank.

Nearer and nearer came the Rubicon. He saw preparations for lowering a boat. The boat was in the water, and four sturdy sailors impelled it towards him with vigorous strokes. Five minutes later he was helped into the boat, and a little later still he clambered on board the Rubicon, — a silent prayer of thanksgiving in his heart to the Almighty Father for his providential rescue.

"Well, my lad," said Captain Scott, advancing towards him, "you've had a pretty narrow escape. We don't generally stop here to take in passengers."

"Captain," said Harry, earnestly, "I thank you for saving my life. I couldn't have held out much longer."

"No, I should think not. How came you in such a pickle? But I won't ask you to tell the story now. You're wet, and I suppose hungry."

Our hero admitted that he was both hungry and thirsty, having been without food or drink for nearly twenty-four hours.

Luckily there was a boy on board, of about Harry's

size. Our hero was supplied with a suit of his clothes, which he found considerably more comfortable than the one he had on, which, having been subjected to the action of the sea-water for twenty hours, was about as thoroughly drenched as it was possible for clothes to be. After being provided with dry clothing, Harry's other wants were attended to. A bowl of hot coffee and a plentiful supply of hearty food made him feel very much more at his ease.

He was now called upon for his story. This he told frankly and without reservation to the captain and the passengers who had gathered about him. His manner was so modest, manly, and self-possessed, that no one for a moment questioned the truth of what he said, and all were prepossessed at once in his favor.

"Well, youngster," said Captain Scott, "it appears that you've had rather a rough experience. I'll try to treat you a little better than did Captain Brandon. We sea-captains are not all black sheep. There are some of us, I hope, that have common humanity."

Captain Scott was a bluff, hearty sailor, with

a large heart, full of kindly impulses. In times of danger he was rough and dictatorial, as was perhaps necessary, but at other times he followed the dictates of a kind heart and generous nature, treating the sailors under his command so well that no one would leave him unless obliged to do so.

Among those who listened with the greatest interest to Harry's story was Maud Lindsay. When it was over she called her father aside.

"Papa," she said, "I have a favor to ask."

"Well, puss?"

"I want you to be kind to this boy, — Harry Raymond."

"How do you want me to be kind to him?"

"I want you to pay his passage to Melbourne, and help him after he gets there."

"Whew, Maud! You seem to have taken a sudden interest in the young man. I suppose you will be wanting to marry him when we get to Melbourne."

"Nonsense, papa!" said Maud, blushing.

"Tell me, then, why I should spend so much money on a stranger."

"You know you've got plenty of money, papa, and

he has been very unfortunate. He's such a nice-looking boy too."

"I suppose if he were only unfortunate, and not nice-looking, — if he had red hair, and a face marked with the small-pox, — you would not be so anxious to have me help him along?"

"No, I don't suppose I should feel quite so much interest in him," Maud admitted. "Do you like homely persons as well as handsome ones, papa?"

"Why, that is rather a delicate question to ask. All I can say is, that I love you just as much as if you were good-looking."

"That's as much as to say I am not," returned Maud.

"I didn't say so."

"But you meant so. However, everybody says I look like you; so, if I am homely, you are also."

"You've got me there, Maud," said Mr. Lindsay, laughing. "After this I shall never dare to question your good looks."

"You'll do as I want you to, then, papa?" said Maud, laying her hand with a coaxing gesture on her father's arm.

"I suppose I shall have to," said her father, smiling.

"That's a good papa. I'll kiss you now."

"I will submit to the infliction with as good a grace as possible," said Mr. Lindsay, with a comic look of resignation.

It will be perceived that the relations between Mr. Lindsay and his daughter were more cordial and affectionate than is sometimes the case. He had a warm, kindly nature, and the death of his wife had led him to centre all his love and all his hopes upon his daughter, who, we must acknowledge, was attractive and lovable enough to justify any father's love and pride. Warm-hearted and impulsive, she won the affection of all who surrounded her, and had even made a considerable impression upon the not very susceptible heart of her strait-laced and prim governess, Miss Pendleton.

Though he had made a playful opposition to the request of his daughter, Mr. Lindsay was from the first favorably disposed towards granting it. He, too, had been pleased with the frank, manly bearing of Harry Raymond, and had been interested in the his-

tory of his life. He felt impelled to help him, as he could well afford to do, and to make up to him for the frowning of fortune by securing to him a more prosperous future.

Accordingly he sought Captain Scott immediately after his interview with Maud.

"I want to speak to you about this boy you have picked up, Captain Scott," he commenced.

"I was just thinking about him myself. If I had anything for him to do, I would let him work his passage. As it is, I suppose I shall have to give it to him. But that won't set him right entirely. He'll land at Melbourne without a penny, with no means of reaching home."

"I'll relieve you from all anxiety on that point, captain. I've taken a fancy to the boy. You may charge me the amount of his passage-money, and I'll take care of him when we get to Melbourne."

"Thank you, Mr. Lindsay; but if you'll do the last, I'll give him a free passage. I like the youngster myself, and am willing to do that much for him."

"Then suppose we call him and let him know what

we propose to do? No doubt he is feeling somewhat anxious about his future."

Harry, being summoned, presented himself. He had meanwhile learned the destination of the Rubicon, and had hardly made up his mind how to feel about it. With a boy's love of adventure and strange lands, he was fascinated by the thought of seeing Australia, of which he had heard so much. Still he could not help reflecting that he would land penniless, separated by half the earth's circumference from his home and mother and sister that he loved. Could he make a living in this strange land, of which he knew nothing, and could he ever earn money enough in addition to pay for his homeward passage? These were questions which it was very easy to ask, but not quite so easy to answer. Still, in spite of his doubts on this point, his situation was so much better than it had been, and he was so thankful for his deliverance from a terrible death, that he was disposed to regard the future hopefully.

"Well, youngster," said the captain, as our hero made his appearance, "I suppose you are ready to settle for your passage."

Harry smiled.

"I should like to," he said, "but I haven't got a cent."

"Then I don't see but I shall have to throw you overboard again, eh, Mr. Lindsay?"

"Can't I work my passage?" suggested our hero.

"No, we are full-handed. However, as you can't pay, I've about made up my mind to give you your passage free."

"You are very kind, Captain Scott," said Harry.

"Quite welcome, my lad. Here's a gentleman who will do more for you than I can."

"I suppose you have felt some anxiety about how you will get along when you arrive at Melbourne?" said Mr. Lindsay.

Harry admitted his anxiety.

"You may lay aside all apprehensions, then. I will take care that you suffer for nothing, and will see what I can do to put you in a way of earning your living."

"You are kinder to me than I deserve," said our hero, surprised and grateful.

"I do this at my daughter's request," said Mr.

Lindsay. "She was the first to see you from the deck, and now she has asked me to interest myself in your favor."

Harry heard this with pleasure. He had noticed Maud Lindsay, and had been quite charmed by her bright, attractive face, and it was pleasant to him to learn that she felt an interest in him. He expressed his gratitude to her.

"Come with me," said Mr. Lindsay, "and you shall thank her in person."

Harry accompanied his new friend with a degree of bashfulness, for he was not much accustomed to young ladies' society. But he soon found himself at ease with Maud. She had numberless questions to ask, which he took pleasure in answering. Then he, too, asked questions about London, where she had hitherto lived. So they got on excellently together, and for the remainder of the voyage were almost inseparable. But upon the details of their growing friendship, however interesting to the parties themselves, I have no room to speak. Sea-life is monotonous, and it may be as well passed over briefly. Enough to say that the weeks sped on, and at length

one pleasant morning the Rubicon ascended the Yarra Yarra River, and the impatient voyagers gazed with eager interest at the principal city in Australia, which, with its handsome buildings and wide, straight streets, now lay stretched out before them.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF MELBOURNE.

It will readily be believed that our hero surveyed with eager interest the city which lay before him. Melbourne was not so large and populous as at present, but it presented an unusually lively and animated appearance. It was in the height of the gold excitement, and multitudes had flocked thither from all parts of the world, so that representatives of every nationality might be found in the streets of Australia's capital. But we are anticipating a little.

Mr. Lindsay, Maud, and Harry stood on the deck of the vessel, waiting for the ship to be secured, that they might go on shore. Mr. Lindsay's mind was quite at ease, for he had money, and money would provide him with all the comforts and luxuries which he could desire. But with Harry it was different. He realized the helplessness of the situation, and, despite his pluck, it made him feel a little

uneasy. He knew that Mr. Lindsay had an interest in him, but he did not like to presume upon that interest.

"Well, my boy," said Mr. Lindsay, "are you ready to go on shore?"

Harry hesitated.

"I should like to go," he said.

"I have just ordered my trunks brought on deck," said the merchant. "In half an hour I think we may be on shore."

"Then I will bid you good-by, sir," said Harry.

"Good-by! What for?"

"Yes, Harry, what for?" echoed Maud.

"Because we are going to part."

"No, we are not. You are going with us."

"But," said Harry, hesitating, "I could not afford to stop where you do."

"Don't trouble yourself about that," said Mr. Lindsay, kindly. "I feel an interest in you, and so does Maud."

"Of course I do," said Maud, so decidedly that Harry blushed, not being accustomed to hear himself

spoken of in such such complimentary terms by a young lady.

"Therefore," proceeded Mr. Lindsay, "I mean to take you on shore with me, and I will afterwards give you time to form your plans, in which I shall give you such assistance as I can."

"You are very kind, sir," said Harry, gratefully.

"Then you will go with us, Harry," said Maud, "won't you?"

"I shall be very glad to do so," said Harry. "You are very kind to me, Miss Lindsay."

"Miss Lindsay!" repeated the young lady, impatiently. "What makes you call me that?"

"Isn't it your name?" asked Harry, smiling.

"No, it isn't. At any rate you are not to call me so. Call me Maud."

"Well, Maud, I will, if you want me to."

"Certainly I do. I wish we could go on shore; I am tired of staying here."

They had not long to stop, however. They were soon on the pier, where a number of carriages were waiting to convey passengers to the various hotels. Mr. Lindsay had previously inquired which was the

best hotel in the city, and gave directions to the driver to convey him thither. As I do not wish to discriminate in favor of any particular hotel, I shall call it by an assumed name, "The Tasmania Hotel."

It had a handsome appearance, being located on Collins Street, which is the principal business street in Melbourne. This street is about one third wider than Broadway, and had, even in the days of which I am writing, many handsome shops and imposing buildings.

"I didn't know Melbourne was such a nice place," said Maud, looking about with satisfaction. "Why, they've got as nice shops here as they have in London."

"Yes, Melbourne is quite an enterprising city," said Mr. Lindsay.

"I like it better than London for one reason," continued Maud.

"What is that?"

"It is brighter and more cheerful. In London it is almost always foggy."

"I should like to deny that, being a true Briton,"

said Mr. Lindsay; "but I am afraid I must admit that London is open to that objection."

"I'll tell you what I am going to do this afternoon, papa."

"Well, what is it?"

"I'm going out shopping."

"I am afraid I can't go with you this afternoon, Maud. I shall be occupied with business."

"There is no need of your going with me, papa."

"But I should not be willing to have you go alone, Maud," said her father.

"I don't mean to go alone. Harry'll go with me, and protect me, only I don't think I shall need any protection; but it'll be pleasant to have him go."

"If he is willing to go, I have no objection."

"You'll come with me, Harry, won't you?" asked Maud.

"I shall be very happy to accompany you, Miss —"

Here Maud held up her finger warningly.

"I mean Maud," said our hero.

"Then that's settled. We'll have lots of fun."

"I am afraid that is not quite the way young

ladies ought to talk," said her father. "What would your governess say?"

"Poor, dear old lady! she'd be shocked, I know she would. She wanted me to be as prim and stupid as herself. But I can't be, papa. It is not in me."

"No, I don't think it is," said her father, smiling.

They were assigned pleasant rooms in the hotel; in fact, the best in the house. Mr. Lindsay, though not an extravagant man, was always liberal in all his arrangements when travelling; and now especially, when he had his daughter with him, he was resolved to spare no expense to secure such comforts as could be procured. Harry also was provided with a pleasant apartment on the same floor. Mr. Lindsay might easily have secured for him a cheaper one on an upper floor; but he was apparently resolved to treat Harry as if he were a member of his own family.

They ordered an early dinner, being tired of ship fare, and anxious for the fresher vegetables and meat which could be obtained on shore. According to the English system, they took their meal privately in Mr. Lindsay's apartment. It proved to be well cooked,

and of good quality, and each of the three did full justice to it.

When the meal was over, Mr. Lindsay said: —

"I must go out now and make a business call, leaving you young people to your own devices."

"We'll go out shopping and sight-seeing, papa, as I told you."

"Don't go too far, or you might get lost."

"Never fear that. But there's one thing you mustn't forget, papa."

"What is that?"

"What does a young lady always want when she goes out shopping?"

"Some money?"

"You've guessed right the first time."

"You won't want much. What do you wish to buy?"

"I can't tell, papa, till I see what they have got to sell."

"Here, then," said Mr. Lindsay, placing two gold sovereigns in his daughter's hand. "Mind and don't spend it foolishly."

"Did you ever know me spend money foolishly, papa?"

"Well, perhaps I had better not express myself on that point. Good-by for a few hours."

Mr. Lindsay went out, and Maud and Harry soon followed. They walked along Collins Street, looking about them with eager interest. They met German, English, French, Chinese; in fact, types of nearly all nationalities. This seemed more strange to Maud than to Harry, for in New York the latter had been accustomed to see a mingling scarcely less great of heterogeneous elements. But in London, or, at any rate, in those parts with which Maud was familiar, there was far less diversity.

"I like this," said Maud, with satisfaction. "Everything looks so new and strange. It's ever so much better fun than being in London. Besides, if I were in London, instead of having you to walk about with me, I should have a stiff old governess calling out every moment, 'You should be more particular about your deportment, Miss Maud.' Now I know you won't say anything about my deportment."

"No, I think not," said Harry. "I don't know what a young lady's deportment ought to be."

"I'm glad of that, for you won't be turning up the whites of your eyes at me in horror at anything I say or do. Oh, there's some ribbon I want! Do you see it in that window? Come in with me, Harry."

They went in, and Maud made a purchase of some ribbon, which she declared to be of a lovely shade.

Now it must be confessed that Maud sometimes allowed her high spirits to carry her too far. She was of an excitable, impulsive temperament. Still her impulses were generous and kindly, and in spite of her faults she was unusually attractive, and it was difficult not to be won over by her frank, affectionate manner. So Harry, who was not much used to the society of young ladies, and, as he said, did not very well know what deportment was proper for them, considered Maud to be very agreeable, and felt grateful for her kindness to himself.

After buying the ribbon, Maud walked on for some little distance till she came to a gentleman's furnishing store.

"I want to go in here, Harry," she said.

"They only sell articles for gentlemen in there," said Harry.

"Never mind," said Maud. "I know what I want. Come in."

Entering the shop, Maud took the lead, and, advancing to the counter, asked the shopman:—

"Will you show me some of your cravats?"

"For yourself, miss?" asked the shopman, surprised. "We don't keep ladies' goods."

"No, for this young gentleman, my cousin," she added, looking at Harry.

"But, Maud, you mustn't buy anything for me," interposed Harry, in a low voice.

"Yes, I shall," said Maud. "I don't like your cravat at all. I'm going to buy you a nice one."

Harry continued to remonstrate, but he found that opposition only made Maud more determined. So he was obliged to submit, while she purchased for him two handsome neckties.

"There, Harry," she said, placing them in his hand, as they left the shop, "I expect you to put one of them on as soon as you get home."

"What will your father say, Maud?" asked Harry. "Perhaps he won't like it."

"You don't know papa," said Maud. "He will only laugh. Now will you promise?"

"I am sure I am much obliged to you. I wish I could buy you a present. Perhaps I may be able to some time."

"There, don't say anything more about it. What a lot of carriages there are in the street! — almost as many as in London."

The street, in fact, was lively with a continued line of cabs, drays, and vehicles of various kinds, presenting a spectacle more animated than might be expected of a city of the size. But Melbourne, though at this time it contained but a hundred thousand inhabitants, had a very large foreign trade with the principal ports not only of Europe but of the United States. This had been largely increased by the gold discoveries, — those who were lucky at the mines being prodigal in their purchases of articles of luxury as well as necessity. Then there was a large export trade in wool, hides, and country produce

from the interior, especially in the two former, for Australia is a great grazing country.

"I wonder what building that is!" said Harry, soon afterwards.

He pointed to a very handsome structure in the Italian style, on the corner of Bourke and Elizabeth Streets. It was adorned with sculptures, and looked new. In fact, it had just been opened to the public.

"That," said a gentleman, who overheard him, "is our new post-office."

"That reminds me," said Harry, "I must write home to-night, to let my mother know where I am."

In fact, Harry did write that same evening, and gave the letter to a servant at the hotel to post. The latter carelessly lost the letter, and then, being afraid of blame, falsely assured Harry that he had posted it. So the fates were once more against Mrs. Raymond, and the missive which would have cheered her heart got swept into a waste-basket, and was consumed with other papers of no value.

CHAPTER XXIX.

HARRY FORMS HIS PLANS.

A WEEK slipped away very pleasantly. Mr. Lindsay was considerably occupied by business, but he seemed satisfied to trust Maud to the companionship of Harry. Together they went about the city sight seeing. They visited the several pleasure-grounds in the immediate neighborhood of the city, among them the Carlton and Fitzroy Gardens. Maud freely declared that she had never had so good a time in her life. Harry also enjoyed it; but every now and then the thought would force itself upon him that he ought to be doing something. At present he was penniless, and but for the liberality of Mr. Lindsay would have hardly known what to do. Besides this, he felt that he ought to be earning money to get nome with. He could not help feeling anxious about his mother and sister.

So one evening, after they had returned from an

excursion to the Yan Yean Water-works, about eighteen miles distant from the city, Harry ventured to ask an interview with Mr. Lindsay.

"Maud, you may go out a few minutes," said her father, "while Harry speaks with me."

"He won't mind me. Will you, Harry?"

"A little," said our hero.

"I didn't know you had any secrets from me," said Maud, reproachfully.

"The secret is not a very great one," said Harry. "I may tell you afterwards."

"Now, Harry," said Mr. Lindsay, after Maud had left the room.

"I wanted to consult you about my plans, Mr. Lindsay," said Harry. "I think I ought to go to work."

"Are you discontented?"

"No, sir; you and Maud have been very kind, much kinder than I deserve. I don't like to feel that you are paying all my expenses."

"In return, you relieve me of a good deal of care by undertaking the charge of Maud. If I had not a

great deal of confidence in you, I would not be willing to leave you together as much as I have."

"Thank you for your confidence, Mr. Lindsay," said Harry. "I hope you will find that I deserve it. I am glad if I have been able to make you any return for your kindness. Still I cannot help feeling, for my mother's sake, that I ought to find something to do, in order that I may return home as soon as possible."

"I might offer to pay your passage back to New York," said Mr. Lindsay; "but if I were in your place, now that you are out here, I should wish to stay a few months. You may never again have a chance to visit Australia, and it is worth exploring. You can write to your mother, so as to relieve her from anxiety."

"I have done so already," said Harry.

"That 's well. Now have you any plans of your own? If you have, and will state them, I will give you my advice as to their wisdom."

"I have been hearing a good deal of the gold mines," said Harry, "and I think I should like to try my luck in them. Yesterday I saw a miner who

had just returned to Melbourne, after working six months. In that time he made ten thousand dollars, which he brought with him. He is an American, and means to return to New York by the next steamer."

"Yes, there are such cases of extraordinary luck; but I hope you won't be too sanguine, or you will, in all probability, be disappointed. It is not every one who earns even a thousand dollars in that time."

"I know that," said Harry. "Still, my chance would be as good as any, and I might be lucky. At any rate, I have nothing to lose, and should see something of the country."

"That is true. Well, when do you want to start?"

"I should like to start as soon as possible."

"Let it be next Monday morning, then. I will take care that you don't go empty-handed."

"I don't think you ought to give me so much, Mr. Lindsay."

"Leave me to decide that. Now shall we call in Maud? I suppose she is tormented by curiosity to know what we are talking about."

"The reason I did not want to speak before her

was, tha. I was afraid she would urge me not to go away."

"Yes, she will miss you very much; but we shall expect to hear from you, and to see you again soon, if only on a visit."

As Harry anticipated, Maud strenuously opposed his plan; but our hero felt that, however pleasant it might be to remain, it was his duty to go. It was of course very agreeable to enjoy the luxurious accommodations of a first-class hotel; but all this was not advancing him in life, and, however kind Mr. Lindsay might be, he felt a degree of delicacy in living at his expense.

Monday morning soon came. Mr. Lindsay called Harry aside, and said:—

"My young friend, you will need some money to start with. In this purse you will find fifty sovereigns (about two hundred and fifty dollars in gold). I think it will support you till you can earn some thing."

"But, Mr. Lindsay," said Harry, quite overwhelmed by this munificent gift, "I ought not to accept so much money."

"My young friend, when I was a boy, I met a friend who took an interest in me, and helped me on. I will try to do the same by you. I am a rich man and can afford it. Say no more about it, but if you need more, or get into any difficulty, let me know, and I will do what I can to help you."

Our hero clasped the hand of the generous merchant warmly.

"I wish I knew how to thank you," he said.

"You can do so, by justifying my good opinion of you, Harry," said Mr. Lindsay, kindly.

"I will try to do that at least," said Harry, earnestly. "I will never forget your generous kindness."

That afternoon Harry started for the gold-diggings. He did not go alone. He was fortunate enough to fall in, at one of the hotels, with a man of middle age, a rough-looking man to appearance, but, as Harry afterwards discovered, a man of warm heart and much kindness. This was the way the acquaintance was made.

Harry overheard him speaking of the mines, from

which he said he had only recently returned. When he had finished speaking, Harry said: —

"May I speak to you a minute, sir?"

"An hour if you like," said the other, kindly.

"I wanted to ask you something about the mines."

"Are you thinking of going there?" asked the stranger, surveying him attentively.

"Yes," said Harry.

"It is a rough sort of life you will have to lead there, my boy."

"I expect so, but I think I can rough it, for a time at least."

"Well, if you have good pluck I have nothing to say. But it aint everybody that succeeds."

"No, sir, I suppose not; but I have a chance."

"At any rate I have no right to dissuade you, for I was successful."

"Are you willing to tell me about it?"

"No objection at all. I was there four months. In the first three I didn't pay expenses, but in the fourth month I more than made up for all my ill luck. How much do you think I've got lodged with my bankers here?"

"A thousand dollars?"

"A thousand dollars seven times over. Eight thousand dollars I cleared in that last month, and seven of it I have salted down."

Harry's eyes sparkled.

"I only wish I could be as fortunate," he said, earnestly.

"What would you do with your money then?" asked the other.

"I would take care of my mother, and make her comfortable."

"Tell me about your mother, that is, if you don't mind. I've got nobody belonging to me, more's the pity, and perhaps that's the reason why I like to hear about other people's relations."

Harry thereupon began to relate his story, and, assured by the stranger's manner that he was interested, kept on to the end.

"You've had bad luck, boy," he said, at the end; "but maybe it'll turn out for the best. Perhaps you have been sent to this out-of-the-way part of the world on purpose to make your fortune. Who knows?"

"I wish it might turn out so."

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said the stranger. "I didn't mean to go back to the mines. Seven thousand dollars was enough for me; but I've a great mind to go back with you."

"I wish you would," said Harry. "I'd like to go with somebody that knows the mines, and can help me with his advice."

"I will go then," said the other, emphatically. "Now tell me when you want to go."

"Next Monday."

"That will suit me as well as any time. I'm beginning to get tired of the city. There is nothing to do here. There's something in the wild, free life of the mines that I like. It's agreed then; we'll go together."

"Yes," said Harry, "and I am very glad that I have secured company."

"So am I. There's no one out there that I cared to make a friend of. It's 'every man for himself, and devil take your neighbor.' Perhaps I was as bad as the rest. But I feel an interest in you, and whether you find any gold or don't find any, you'll need a

friend. Perhaps you'll need one more if you are successful than if you fail. What is your name?"

"Harry Raymond."

"And mine is John Bush. I would give you my card if I had any, but they don't care about such things at the mines. Will you take supper with me?"

"No, thank you; I shall be expected back."

"Have a cigar, then?"

"I never smoke, Mr. Bush."

"So much the better, Harry. But it's second nature to me, and I can't leave off. Let me see, what day is it?"

"Friday."

"Then Monday we will start. Call and see me before that time."

"I'll call to-morrow afternoon."

"Very good. We'll arrange then all that needs arranging."

So they parted.

Bush, as Harry saw, was rather rough in his manners, but he seemed kindly. He felt fortunate in meeting him, for his advice would be valuable,

especially as he had been successful. Besides, as he began to understand, the undertaking upon which he was about to enter was one of difficulty and perhaps danger, especially for one so young, and he would be the better for a friend like Bush. He saw him again, as promised, on Saturday, and got a list of things which the miner informed him would be necessary.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE VICTORIA GOLD MINES.

Four weeks had passed. The scene has changed for Harry. He is no longer living in a first-class city hotel on the fat of the land, but is "roughing it" at the Victoria mines, seventy miles north-west of Melbourne.

These diggings were of limited extent, occupying not above a square mile; but this square mile was a scene of extraordinary animation and activity. Scattered over it were hundreds of miners, rough-bearded, and clothed with little regard to taste or elegance. They represented many countries, differing widely except in being all occupied by one engrossing passion, the love of gold. Some, rough as they now look, had been gentlemen at home, fastidious in their dress and personal appearance, but not to be recognized now, so much were they changed. Others had always been roughs, and this life which they were now leading

was little adapted to improve them. But it is not necessary to speak of the mines in general. Our interest is confined to two, and these two are of course Harry and his adviser and friend John Bush.

At the moment of my introducing them once more to the reader, Bush was seated upon the ground smoking a pipe, while Harry was carefully inspecting the back of a shovel, from which he had just been washing some earth, in search of particles of gold.

"Do you find anything, boy?" asked Bush, taking his pipe from his mouth.

Harry came nearer, that Bush might examine for himself.

"Yes," he said, "there is a little."

"It's the only gold I have found to-day."

"Yes, lad, we are not growing rich very fast, that's a fact. We've been at work more than three weeks, and I don't think we have netted five ounces."

"No," said Harry.

I may remark here that an ounce is worth not far from twenty dollars. It follows accordingly that the amount referred to represented less than a hundred dollars.

"I'll tell you what I have been thinking of, Harry," said Bush.

"What is it?"

"I think our chances will be better further up the hill. Here we may, if we are lucky, get three ounces a week, — probably not as much. What I want is a nugget."

"But that isn't so easy to find," said Harry.

"No, that's true; but they are found, for all that. Shall I tell you what has made me think of it most?"

"Yes, if you will."

Bush lowered his voice.

"Do you see that spot, about half a mile away, where that rough, gray rock stands?"

"Yes."

"Three nights ago I dreamed that I found a big nugget within a yard of that rock. Now, I never put much faith in dreams; but I've had that same one twice since."

"You have?" said Harry, interested.

"Yes, and you know what they say, 'the third time never fails.' I'm not over-superstitious, Harry, but

it's my idea that dream means something. What do you say?"

"It is very singular, at any rate," said Harry.

"At any rate, I've a mind to see what it means, if it means anything. So I'm going to leave you here, and go up there. If I find nothing, well and good, I'll come back. If I'm lucky, we'll share the good luck. What do you say?"

"That you are very generous, Bush." Harry had come to call him so, for they are not very ceremonious at the mines.

"Wait till you have something to thank me for."

The next morning, accordingly, Harry was left alone. He worked all day without meeting with much success. All the gold he found probably would not have amounted to fifty cents, and that was not a very liberal compensation for the long and tiresome labor needed.

At nightfall Bush came back.

"Well, Bush," said Harry, "have you met with any success?"

"No," said Bush; "and I didn't expect any, not to-day."

"Why not?"

"Because it's only the first day."

"Still you might find something the first day. Did you find nothing?"

"Yes, a few grains of gold; but that I did not care for. I'm after a nugget. You don't understand what I mean by the first day."

"No."

"I had that dream three times, you know, Harry," said the miner, lowering his voice. "It's impressed on my mind that if I find anything it'll be on the third day."

"Perhaps you will," said our hero, who was impressed by the evident earnestness of his companion. "At any rate, I hope so."

The next morning Bush left Harry, and returned to the rock.

While Harry was at work, meeting with a little more success than the day before, a rough fellow, Henderson by name, lounged up to him.

"What luck, comrade?" he asked.

"Not much," said Harry. "I haven't made my fortune yet."

"Nor I," said Henderson, emphasizing the declaration with an oath. "I've had cursed bad luck all along."

This was not surprising, for Henderson was a lazy, shiftless fellow, whose main idea was to make a living without earning it. He had come from London, where his reputation was none of the best, and had haunted the mines for a considerable time. He worked at mining by fits and starts, but never long enough to gain anything. At one time, indeed, he appeared to have considerable money, with which he returned to Melbourne, where he soon got rid of it. Where he got this money was a mystery. But it happened, by an unfortunate coincidence, that just at that time a poor fellow who, by hard labor, had managed to collect about fifty ounces of the precious metal, suddenly found himself stripped of everything. There were some who suspected Henderson of knowing something of this gold, and where it went to; but nothing could be proved, and so of course nothing was done. Harry had seen him more than once, and he understood very well what sort of a character he

was; so, at present, he hoped that the fellow would soon leave him.

"Where's your pal?" asked Henderson.

"You mean Bush?"

"Who else should I mean?"

"He's trying another place."

"Whereabouts?"

Harry pointed out Bush further up the hill. The distance being but quarter of a mile, it was possible to distinguish him.

"What sent the fool up there?"

"He is not a fool," said Harry, shortly.

"Call him what you like; he's a fool if he expects to find anything up there."

"He has his reasons," said Harry.

"What are they?" inquired Henderson, growing attentive.

"You must ask him if you want to know," said Harry.

Henderson went off whistling, and our hero, on thinking the matter over, was rather sorry that he had hinted as much about his friend's reasons for going up the hill. Having a very poor opinion of

Henderson, he feared that the latter would watch and find out if anything of importance were discovered, and this was hardly desirable in a district where the ordinary restraints of law were relaxed, and cupidity often led to violence. At any rate, Harry determined to put Bush on his guard.

"Bush," he said, when the latter returned, "Henderson has been asking about you to-day. He thought you were a fool to go up there after gold."

"Let him think so if he likes."

"But I am afraid you will think that I am the fool."

"Why so?"

"Because I told him you had reasons for going there."

"Just as well not said, my lad: but no harm's done."

"Have you found anything yet?"

"No; but it's only the second day, you remember."

"You still think that the third day will be the lucky one?"

"Yes, if any."

"That is to-morrow."

"Yes, to-morrow will decide. If I don't find anything to-morrow, I shall give it up for a bad job, and come back."

They had a tent just off the grounds. Here they slept and lived, cooking their food, and keeping house, if it may be called so. When the day's work was over, Bush generally sat down at the door of the tent, and smoked a pipe. He tried to induce Harry to do the same; but our hero had never touched tobacco, and had no cravings for it. So he always declined.

When the pipe was smoked, Bush, if he happened to feel in a communicative mood, often related incidents from his life, which had been an adventurous one. To these narrations Harry always listened with interest.

"I've been a rolling stone, Harry," said his companion. "It might have been different; but all that belong to me are dead. There's nobody I feel an interest in except you. I'm going to keep track of you, and when I die, if I leave anything, you shall have it."

"Don't talk about dying," said Harry. "Perhaps you'll live longer than I."

"Perhaps so; but I'm a deal older, my lad. There's more chance for you."

Bush was a man in the prime of life, and Harry built no hopes on this promise. He only thought that it was very kind, and, it being his nature to repay kindness with kindness, he felt drawn to his rough companion more closely on learning of his intention.

The next morning Bush returned to his digging on the hill-side, and Harry continued at the same place, meeting with a little success, but not much. However, there were some who worked for months with less encouragement, and finally met with a streak of luck. So Harry did not lose hope, though he felt that it was tantalizing and trying to the patience.

At nightfall Bush came back. Before he had come up to him, Harry read in his excited look that something had happened.

"What luck?" he asked.

Bush looked about him cautiously. There were two men within hearing distance, so he lowered his

tone. He only uttered five words, but they were of such a character that Harry became no less excited than he.

"*The dream has come true!*"

This was what he said, and Harry understood at once.

"Let us go and take a walk, my lad."

Harry eagerly complied with his invitation, and they wandered away till they were out of earshot of any one.

"Now tell me all about it," said he.

"It was about the middle of the afternoon," said Bush; "the day was nearly gone, and I began to think what a fool I was to place such dependence upon a dream, even if it were three times repeated. However, it was only the loss of three days, and that wasn't much; so little harm was done, if all came to nothing. Of course I wasn't going to give up till the day was over. Just as I was thinking this, suddenly I struck against something hard. I kept on, not hoping much, till I brought out a nugget,—a stunner, I tell you."

"How much would it weigh?" asked Harry.

"I hefted it," said Bush, "and it doesn't weigh an ounce less than twenty-five pounds."

Twenty-five pounds! Harry held his breath in astonishment and delight. He performed a rough calculation hastily in his head, and it dawned upon him that the nugget must be worth at least five thousand dollars!

That was pretty good for one day's work.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DEATH OF BUSH.

"WHERE is the nugget? What did you do with it?" inquired Harry.

"I buried it in the spot where I found it," said Bush. "I didn't dare to bring it here in open day. There are worthless fellows enough hereabouts that wouldn't hesitate to take my life, for the sake of it."

"But you can't help its being found out that you have it."

"No more I can; but in an hour after it is known I start for Melbourne."

"Will you go to-morrow?"

"Yes, my lad, we will both go to-morrow. It's share and share alike, you know. Half the nugget is yours, and if anything happens to me the whole, and all the money I have in Melbourne."

"Thank you, Bush; but I'd rather you'd enjoy it

yourself. I'd return the compliment, but I'm afraid all the money I have wouldn't help you much."

"You're young yet. There's time enough for you to become rich, as I doubt not you will."

About half-past nine o'clock Bush and Harry threw themselves down in the shadow of their tent, and courted sleep. They did not take the trouble to undress, but merely wrapped themselves in blankets and lay down.

"I feel more sleepy than usual," said Bush. "Maybe it's the excitement of finding the nugget."

"That's what keeps me awake," said Harry.

As he spoke he began to listen intently.

"What's the matter?" asked Bush.

"I thought I heard somebody just outside."

"Somebody passing on their way to their own tent."

"It may be so. I hope whoever it is didn't hear what you said about the nugget."

"They wouldn't find it here, at any rate. Good-night, Harry."

"Good-night."

Bush turned over, and it was not long before his

deep breathing indicated that he was fast asleep. Harry, on the contrary, was wakeful. He had a nervous, restless feeling, as if something were going to happen, though his forebodings were indefinite, and took no decided shape.

At length he fell into a light slumber. How long it lasted he could not tell. But all at once he awoke, to find a man bending over Bush with a knife in his hand. He uttered a cry of horror, and sprung to his feet, but too late! The knife descended, penetrating the breast of the ill-fated miner, who awoke with a groan.

"Give me the nugget quick, boy, or I'll serve you the same way," said the murderer, turning to Harry.

By the uncertain light Harry recognized Henderson.

"Wretch!" he exclaimed, in a tone of horror, "what have you done?"

"There's no time for talking," said Henderson, fiercely; "give me the nugget, or (here he interpolated an oath) I'll send you after Bush."

He raised his knife, but Harry was too quick for him. Fearing danger in some form, he had placed

Bush's revolver in his pocket when he lay down. He drew it out suddenly, and, presenting it, fired. The charge took effect in Henderson's right shoulder. With an oath he dropped the knife, and, staggering out of the tent, fell just outside.

"Well done, my lad!" said Bush, feebly.

"Are you much hurt, Bush?" asked Harry, bending over the sufferer, and speaking anxiously.

"He's done for me, Harry. I shan't live till morning."

"Don't say that, Bush. Perhaps you're not so much hurt as you think for."

"There's no hope, lad. I'm going to die. I don't know why, but I had a presentiment that death wasn't far off."

By this time the occupants of two neighboring tents had come up. Seeing Henderson lying groaning just outside, they entered and asked what was the trouble.

It was soon explained.

Now Bush was popular among the miners, and Henderson the reverse, his character being thoroughly understood.

"We'll hang him to the nearest tree," they said.

"Wait till to-morrow," said Harry. "Then let the whole company of miners decide what is to be done."

To this at length they assented, but cast glances far from friendly at the prostrate wretch, with whose groans of pain were now mingled appeals for mercy.

"Comrades," said Bush, feebly, "come here a moment, I've something to say."

"Say on, Bush."

"That wretch has killed me. To-morrow won't find me alive. That I know full well. Now I want you to witness that this lad here is to have all I possess. There's a matter of fourteen hundred pounds with Bird & Bolton, bankers in Melbourne, and what I have here the lad knows. He is to have all. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Bush."

"I've paper and ink in my tent," said one; "I'll bring them, and draw up a line to that effect, which you shall sign if you can."

"Do so, and quick," said Bush.

In five minutes, the paper was brought, and the

man who proposed this plan, after asking Harry's name, wrote as follows: —

"I, John Bush, being about to die, bequeath to Harry Raymond, here present, all that I have, namely, fourteen hundred pounds in the hands of Bird & Bolton, bankers of Melbourne, and whatever I may leave here."

"I don't know whether that's ship-shape," said the writer; "but if you can sign it, we will witness it, and I think it will do."

The pen was placed in Bush's fingers, and he succeeded with some difficulty in affixing his signature, after which he sank back exhausted. The three men who had come up put down their names as witnesses, or rather two of them did, and the third, who was unable to write, made his mark.

"I'm glad that's done," said Bush, a smile of satisfaction crossing his face. "I can die more content Give the paper to the lad."

The paper was handed to Harry, who received it with much emotion.

"Thank you, Bush," he said; "but I'd ten times rather you'd live to enjoy this money yourself."

"I don't doubt it, lad; but it wasn't to be. I hope the money'll give you pleasure. Then I can think that I have done some good."

The three men who had witnessed the paper next turned their attention to Henderson.

"What are you going to do with me?" he asked, nervously.

"You'll see in the morning," said one, grimly.

He was securely bound, and carried to one of the tents, where he was kept under secure guard. Meanwhile Harry watched beside the suffering man.

"I wish there was a doctor near by," he said.

"No doctor could do me any good now," said Bush. "I've got my death-wound."

Indeed it seemed so. The knife had done its work so surely that not all the doctors in the world could have saved the miner from death. About four o'clock in the morning he died. Then Harry, exhausted with watching, fell asleep beside his dead comrade, and slept heavily till he was aroused by a rough shake.

He looked up, and recognized one of the three men who had come to their tent the night before.

"Are you coming to see Henderson swing?" he asked.

"What?"

"We've tried him, and he's to be hung as soon as they can get a rope."

Justice is swift in mining communities. It was not yet seven o'clock in the morning, but the guilty man had already been tried, and punishment was to be inflicted.

Harry shuddered.

"No," he said; "I don't want to see it."

"He killed your friend."

"I know he did; but I pity the poor wretch. I suppose he ought to be punished; but I don't want to see it."

"You're too soft-hearted; but just as you like."

An impromptu gallows had been erected, and a rope was soon forthcoming. Henderson was dragged to it, pale and trembling, imploring mercy at every step. But there was no mercy in the hearts of the rough men who had him in charge. He had foully

murdered one of their number, and they were determined that he should pay the penalty. Among the hundreds who participated in the scene, there were others perhaps as reckless and criminal as he, who, exposed to the same temptation, would have acted in the same manner. But they, too, heaped execrations upon the guilty man, as he cowered under the gaze of the vindictive mob, and were apparently as anxious as any that justice should be done. It might have been from policy, but, at all events, Henderson, as he glanced despairingly from one face to another, did not encounter one kindly or pitying look. The only one who pitied him was the boy whose friend had been stricken down at his side, and he was not present.

I shall not linger on the details of the execution. No one of my readers, I am sure, can take pleasure in such a scene.

Half an hour after, as Harry still lay in his tent, a miner came to him.

"Is it all over?" asked Harry, sick at heart.

"Yes, it's all over. Henderson won't prowl round any more."

During the day Bush was buried. The funeral ceremonies were slight. A grave was dug on the hill-side, and the body was lowered down, and hastily covered over. Harry procured a piece of board, which he set up for a gravestone, cutting on its surface, as well as he could, his friend's name in rude capitals, — JOHN BUSH.

He took into his confidence the three miners who have been already spoken of, and told them about the nugget, feeling that it might prove a source of danger to himself as well as Bush, unless he availed himself of the assistance of others. He offered to divide a thousand dollars between them, if they would help him to get it safe to Melbourne. He had another reason also for desiring their company. They were witnesses to the paper which Bush had signed, and Harry thought it probable that their presence and testimony might be needed to satisfy Bird & Bolton, first of the death of Bush, and next of his rightful claim to the money belonging to the deceased, which the firm had on deposit.

The three miners were quite willing to accompany Harry. The sum which he offered them would prob-

ably far exceed their earnings during the time occupied, even after deducting all necessary expenses. A day later, therefore, Harry, escorted by his three mining acquaintances, with the costly nugget in charge, started on his return to Melbourne.

CHAPTER XXXII.

HARRY DECIDES TO LEAVE AUSTRALIA.

"I wish Harry were here," said Maud Lindsay, discontentedly. "It's so lonesome since he went away."

"Upon my word, that is complimentary," said her father. "You don't appear to value my company."

"Of course I do, papa; but then you know you are away a good deal of the time. Besides, you are older than I am."

"That is unfortunately true. I believe most fathers are older than their daughters."

"Have you heard from Harry yet?"

"Not since the letter of last week. He reported then that he had not found much gold."

"I wish he would make his fortune quick, so that he could come back."

"I begin to think you're in love with Harry, Maud."

"I begin to think so too, papa. Would you object to him for a son-in-law?"

"Just at present I might. I don't think you are old enough to be married."

"Don't be foolish, papa. Of course I don't want to be married till I am old enough."

"I can't promise so long beforehand. Besides, it is just possible that Harry may have somebody else."

"I hope he won't," said Maud. "We just suit each other."

"You speak confidently, Maud. Perhaps you may change your mind."

"No, I shan't," said Maud, positively. "If I don't marry Harry Raymond, I'll be an old maid."

This conversation took place on the morning of Harry's return to Melbourne. Indeed, Maud had hardly ceased speaking when a knock was heard at the door. Maud rose to open it. She was overwhelmed with delight when, in the visitor, in spite of his rough garb, she recognized our hero, the loss of whose company she had been deploring.

"O Harry, how glad I am to see you!" she exclaimed, actually hugging Harry in her delight.

Harry was rather embarrassed at the unexpected warmth of his reception, but felt that it would be impolite not to kiss Maud in return, and accordingly did so.

"I am glad to see you, Harry," said Mr. Lindsay, advancing to meet him. "Have you just arrived from the mines?"

"Yes, sir."

"I hope no ill luck has hurried you back."

"Partly ill luck, and partly good luck. Bush found a nugget of gold worth at least five thousand dollars."

"Then you had nothing to do with finding it?"

"We were partners, and he insisted that half of it belonged to me."

"That was generous. So you have come back to dispose of it. Is Bush with you?"

"No," said Harry, soberly. "He is dead."

"Dead! Why, that is sudden."

"I will tell you about it"

"Sit right down here, and tell me."

Harry seated himself, and gave a brief account of the murderous attack upon Bush, and his death, mentioning in the conclusion that he was the heir of the miner's property.

"Let me see the paper," said Mr. Lindsay.

Harry exhibited the paper signed by Bush just before he died.

"Who are the witnesses whose names are written here?"

"The three men who came up at the time of the murder."

"You will have to send for them to prove the validity of this document, and satisfy the bankers that you are the Harry Raymond to whom the money is bequeathed."

"They are here in Melbourne. I brought them with me."

"You are sharper than I thought. What made you think of this?"

"I thought their testimony might be needed. Besides, I was liable to be attacked, and perhaps murdered on the way, if it were discovered that I had the

nugget; so I offered them a thousand dollars between them, if they would come up with me."

"It is a considerable sum, but I think you were wise to pay it. I know these bankers with whom your friend's money is deposited. If you desire it, I will take the matter in hand, and present your claim at once."

"That is what I wanted to ask, Mr. Lindsay. If you will be so kind, I shall be very much obliged to you."

"Then we had better lose no time. I have an hour to spare. Suppose you come with me now."

"But," said Maud, "I want Harry to stay with me."

"Business first, pleasure afterwards, Maud," said her father; "and this business of Harry's is of much importance."

"Well, Harry, come back as soon as you can," said Maud.

To this Harry readily agreed, and went out with Mr. Lindsay.

Messrs. Bird & Bolton were in their banking-office.

"Good-morning, Mr. Lindsay," said Mr. Bird, as that gentleman entered. "Is there anything I can do for you this morning?"

"Not for me, but for this young man," said Mr. Lindsay, presenting Harry.

Mr. Bird looked at Harry in some surprise, for he was still clad in his rough miner's costume.

"You have fourteen hundred pounds left on deposit by John Bush, a miner, if I am rightly informed."

"Your information is correct, Mr. Lindsay."

"John Bush is dead. This young man, whom I previously knew, was his partner, and to him Bush bequeathed all of which he died possessed."

"I suppose your young friend has proof to substantiate his claim," said Mr. Bird, cautiously.

"He has."

Here Mr. Lindsay produced the paper already referred to.

"This seems correct, but the witnesses ought to be produced. They might be men of straw, you know."

"Of course. In such a matter, you are right to be

cautious. The witnesses are all in Melbourne, and shall be produced," said Mr. Lindsay.

"I have no doubt all will be satisfactory; but of course, as a man of business, Mr. Lindsay, you will not be surprised that we require absolute proof."

"You are perfectly right in doing so. I should do the same in your place. We propose to bring the witnesses here, that you may satisfy yourself that all is genuine, and as it should be. If you will appoint an hour that will suit your convenience they shall be on hand."

"To-morrow at eleven, then."

"Very well."

After a little more conversation Mr. Lindsay and Harry withdrew.

"There is one thing more that I would like your advice about," said Harry.

"What is that? Of course you shall have it."

"I want to sell my nugget at the best advantage."

"Where is it?"

"I will bring it to the hotel at any time. It is in charge of the three miners."

"You are rather careless to trust them."

"I don't know but I am," said Harry; "but I didn't know what else to do."

"I will go around with you to the place where they are stopping, and then will call with you upon a man who deals in gold. The matter may as well be settled at once."

The three miners had put up at an inferior inn in a narrow street running out of the principal avenue in Melbourne. Luckily they were at home when Harry called with Mr. Lindsay.

The latter found a certain reluctance on their part to give up the nugget.

"You see," said one, "this young chap has promised us two hundred pounds between us. Maybe he will forget all about that, and leave us to shift for ourselves."

"Do you think I would be so mean?" exclaimed Harry.

"The man is right," said Mr. Lindsay. "He wants to have everything made sure."

"But I can't pay them till the gold is sold."

"That's true; nor would it be advisable, for you

want their testimony before the bankers. But I think I see a way to arrange matters."

"How is that?" asked Harry.

"I will advance one half the sum you promised at once, and guarantee the payment of the balance to-morrow afternoon, after they have rendered in their testimony at the banking-house."

This suggestion was accepted by all parties as the best practical solution of the difficulty arising from the conflicting interests of the two parties, namely, the three miners on the one hand, and Harry on the other. It must not be supposed that they had seen anything in him to inspire distrust; but it is a good rule to keep friendship and business apart, and appearances are sometimes deceptive.

It will not be necessary to follow out the business in all its details. There were some unexpected delays; but at the end of a fortnight the whole matter was settled, and Harry found himself, not indeed rich, but richer than he ever anticipated.

The gold nugget was found to be worth five thousand four hundred and fifty dollars. The money in the banker's hands, with accruing interest, amounted

to seven thousand and seventy-five. The account was rendered in English currency, but for convenience' sake I have reduced it to Federal money. This, then, was the final statement of Harry's inheritance: —

On deposit with Bird & Bolton,	$7,075.00
Sum realized from gold nugget,	5,450.00
Total, ...	$12,525.00

From this amount must be deducted the thousand dollars which Harry agreed to pay to the three miners. When this was done, he was left with eleven thousand five hundred and twenty-five dollars, which, for a boy of his age, was certainly a very comfortable capital.

When this matter was settled, Harry began to bethink himself of home, and told Mr. Lindsay that he felt it his duty to go back to America as soon as possible, and gladden his mother's heart with the news of his good fortune.

"You are right, Harry," said Mr. Lindsay,

promptly. "Your first duty is to your mother. I will not say a word to dissuade you from it."

But if Mr. Lindsay forbore to dissuade Harry, Maud was not so forbearing. She was exceedingly dissatisfied at the idea of losing the society of our hero.

"Why can't we all sail in the same steamer, papa?" she said.

"Because, Maud, I am not ready to go back yet. My business is not finished."

"Then I shall never see Harry again."

"I think you will. I have invited Harry to visit us in England next summer, and I think he will accept the invitation."

"Will you, Harry?" asked Maud, eagerly.

"I will if I can, Maud," said Harry; "and I think I can."

"I am afraid you will forget me, Harry."

"I certainly shall not, Maud. You have been too kind for that. As soon as I get back to America I shall write to you, and let you know how I arrived."

Maud was forced to be satisfied with this promise. Harry made all needed preparations for his re-

turn, and a week from the time when his affairs were settled, he took cabin passage on a steamer bound from Melbourne to New York. We must precede him, and inquire how matters have been going on in Vernon during his absence.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SQUIRE TURNER SPINS HIS WEB.

HARRY'S disappearance inflicted a blow upon Mrs. Raymond from which she did not easily recover. Coming so soon after her husband's sudden death, she felt that her life had indeed become desolate, and but that she knew her life was necessary to little Katy, she would not have cared to live. But for Katy's sake she tried to bear up as well as she could against her double loss.

Besides, so far as Harry was concerned, she was not without hope that he might some day return. He might be dead; but of this there was no proof. Mrs. Raymond clung to the hope that, whatever might be the cause of his absence, it was not occasioned by death. But, in spite of this hope, it was hard to have day after day pass without any intelligence. The home seemed very lonely and sad now. Even little

Katy, naturally a lively child, was subdued and more sober than she used to be.

But Mrs. Raymond had another cause for anxiety, and that a serious one. During her husband's life she had always lived in comfort, and never felt any anxiety about the future. But now whatever money was to be earned for the support of the little household must be earned by herself, for of course Katy was too young to earn anything, and must for some years be kept at school. How to earn money enough to meet their expenses was a difficult problem. She could think of no other way except sewing, and that, even under the best circumstances, as my readers very well know, is very poorly paid.

Squire Turner occasionally called on Mrs. Raymond, feeling that it was for his interest to assume the rôle of a disinterested friend. One evening, about six weeks after Harry's disappearance, he took his cane and walked over to the little cottage. The widow had come to look forward with interest to his visits, feeling in her position the need of a friend. She welcomed him, accordingly, with an evident pleasure, which he did not fail to notice.

"I hope you are well, Mrs. Raymond," he said, removing his hat, and taking the chair which the widow brought forward.

"I am well in health, Squire Turner," was the reply, "but I am very unhappy. I sometimes feel as if my sorrows are greater than I can bear."

"You have Katy left."

"Yes, Katy is a dear little girl. But for her I should not care to live. But for her and the hope that Harry may come back some time—"

"While there is life there is hope," said the squire. "I mean while we are not certain of death, there is ground for hope."

"Don't you really think he will come back some time, Squire Turner?"

"Certainly, there is a chance of it," said the squire, cautiously; "but it is not well to be too sanguine, for you know we cannot be sure of anything."

"If there was anything I could do," replied the widow; "but I can only wait, and the suspense is very wearing."

"Of course, I quite feel for you. Depend upon it, I shall do what I can to relieve your anxiety when-

ever I see clearly what to do. You give me credit for that?"

"Yes, Squire Turner, I know you are a true friend. The time was when I did you injustice; but I see more clearly now."

If Squire Turner had had any sense of shame he would have blushed at this testimony from the woman whom he had done so much to injure; but his feelings were not very keen, and he only listened with complacency, perceiving that he had made good progress in securing the widow's confidence. All his plans seemed to be working well thus far. He was now ready to take the next step, and this was to get Mrs. Raymond into his power by placing her under pecuniary obligations.

"I hope you will excuse me one question which I am about to ask," he said, "and believe that it is dictated, not by idle curiosity, but my interest in your welfare. Do you not feel considerable difficulty in earning enough money to defray your expenses?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Raymond, "that is one of my troubles. Katy and I have few wants; but I find it costs a good deal for food, and fuel, and clothes."

"Of course."

"Especially as I have no way of earning except by the needle. Sewing is very poorly paid."

"That is quite true. By the way, Mrs. Raymond, I shall be glad to give you all the work I have in that line, and to pay you a fair price for doing it."

"Thank you, Squire Turner. It will be a favor to me."

"And if you find you can't meet your expenses, don't hesitate at any time to apply to me for a loan."

"You are very kind, Squire Turner, but I don't like to borrow money."

"I can understand your feelings about it; but you need not feel any delicacy."

"I am afraid I should never be able to repay the money."

"As to that, I can show you a way that will relieve your feeling."

"What's that?"

"You are aware that this house belongs to you, with the exception of a mortgage of four hundred dollars, which I hold. Now it is probably worth over a thousand dollars," he answered, courteously.

"Mr. Raymond considered it worth, with the land, twelve hundred dollars."

"Ahem!" said the squire, who had his reasons for underrating the property; "it was probably worth that to him, but I don't think it would fetch much over a thousand, if it were brought to a sale. However, that is not to the purpose. I only mentioned it to suggest that the property might serve as ample security for any sum you might wish to borrow, so that you need not feel delicate about any loans you might be forced to ask."

"That is true," said Mrs. Raymond. "I did not think of that."

"Have you a supply of money on hand at present?" asked the squire.

Mrs. Raymond was forced to acknowledge that she had less than a dollar in the house.

"I thought it might be so," he said, "and therefore I came provided. You had better let me lend you fifty dollars."

After some hesitation Mrs. Raymond consented to take the money.

"If you will let me have a sheet of paper I will

draw up a note, which you can sign," said the squire, smoothly. "I know that it will be more agreeable to your feelings to regard the loan as a business transaction rather than as a favor."

How could Mrs. Raymond feel otherwise than grateful to the man who entered so delicately into her feelings? She unhesitatingly acquiesced in what he proposed, and brought forward writing materials, with which Squire Turner drew up a note of hand, which Mrs. Raymond signed. He then drew from his pocket-book ten five-dollar bills, which he handed to the widow, depositing the note in his wallet.

"There," said he, pleasantly, "our business is at an end, and now we can talk as friends. I believe James is wanting some shirts. Shall you have leisure to make them?"

"I shall be very glad to do so."

"Then may I trouble you to buy the necessary materials? — you will be a better judge than I on that point. He will bring over one of his shirts as a pattern, and you may make them up at your leisure, and send in a bill for work and materials together."

Of course Mrs. Raymond was only too glad to

accept this commission, and readily agreed to do as requested.

Squire Turner continued, as he had begun, to act as a sympathizing friend of Mrs. Raymond. From time to time he supplied her with money as she required it, in each case, however, taking her note for the amount, and, when the sum was sufficient to warrant it, securing it by an additional mortgage upon the property. When he proposed this, it was ostensibly to spare the feelings of the widow, and prevent her from feeling any delicacy or sense of pecuniary obligations.

"You see, Mrs. Raymond," he said, smoothly, "you have no cause to feel grateful to me. Every pecuniary transaction between us is upon a strict business basis. I know you would prefer that it should be so."

"I know that you are very kind, Squire Turner, and I can't help feeling grateful, though you tell me there is no occasion for my being so."

This is what Mrs. Raymond said, and she felt that Squire Turner was indeed a very disinterested friend,

though it would be hard to show in what respect he had been so.

Meanwhile, Squire Turner had kept in constant correspondence with Mr. Robinson, the Milwaukie lawyer, touching the land grant already referred to, and it became necessary for him to obtain Mrs. Raymond's authority to act for her in the matter. It was important for him to do this, without leading her to suspect that it was a matter of much moment. One evening he introduced the subject as if casually: —

"By the way, Mrs. Raymond, your son Harry placed in my hands some time since a land warrant belonging to your late father, with the request that I would ascertain whether it was worth anything."

"I remember it now that you mention it, Squire Turner," said the widow. "I suppose it is worthless."

"No," said the squire, candidly. "I think you may get a little something for it. I suppose fifty or a hundred dollars would be acceptable."

"It would be more than I ever expected to realize

from it. Do you really think it is likely to amount to as much as that?"

"I really do, — that is, I hope so. If you are content to give me authority to act for you, I will do the best I can, and, of course, I shall charge you nothing for my services."

"How kind you are, Squire Turner! I will sign anything you think best."

"I have brought a paper properly drawn up, empowering me to act for you," said the squire. "I will see that you have no trouble in the matter."

Here he produced the paper, and Mrs. Raymond unhesitatingly affixed her signature.

"I am sure," she said, "I never expected, after so many years, that the warrant would ever amount to anything."

"It may not, but I think it will. I will do my best for you. In fact, I shall be obliged to go West next week on some other business, and will take Milwaukie on my way. I never was there, and, apart from your business, I shall enjoy seeing the city."

Was it surprising that Mrs. Raymond considered Squire Turner a very disinterested friend? She felt

sure that he was putting himself to considerable trouble and some expense to promote her interests. As to that, it was certainly true that Squire Turner's sole motive, in making the western journey on which he had determined, was connected with Mrs. Raymond's land warrant.

What success he met with will be told in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AN UNEXPECTED PROPOSAL.

THE next week Squire Turner started for Milwaukie. He did not mention this as his destination in the village, but stated that he had business in Chicago and beyond, not caring to excite any suspicions in Vernon, which was just large enough for everybody to feel interested in everybody else's affairs. But in reality he stopped in Chicago only long enough to take dinner, and then hurried on to Milwaukie, where he proceeded at once to the office of Mr. Robinson.

"I am glad to see you, Squire Turner," said the lawyer, rising from the table at which he was seated; "the fact is, I was just thinking over your business."

"Well, what is the prospect?" asked Squire Turner.

"Excellent. The parties at first were disposed to bluff me off, and pooh-pooh our claims; but they have

probably taken legal advice, and have changed their tune in consequence."

"Do they propose anything?"

"Yes; they offer five thousand dollars for the surrender of the land warrant, which will insure them a perfect title."

"Five thousand dollars!" repeated Squire Turner, slowly. "Of course, that is a good sum compared with the original value of the warrant; but—"

"Small when the present value of the land is considered. Precisely so."

"What, then, would you advise?"

"I would advise you to hold off for more. You are not in a hurry, I suppose?"

"Not if you think it will pay to wait."

"I do think so. If you are firm, it will argue a consciousness of strength, which will produce an impression on their minds."

"How much do you think I ought to get?"

"Not less than ten thousand dollars."

"Is there a chance of their coming up to that figure?"

"Yes."

"I should prefer friendly compromise to initiating legal proceedings, even if I get less."

Squire Turner had two reasons for this preference. First, he knew well enough the delays of the law, and that years might pass before the matter could be settled, if once the law should be appealed to. But, more than this, such a course would produce more or less publicity, and Mrs. Raymond might hear of it, which was very far from his wishes. But a compromise could be effected without any public mention of the affair, and this would be safer and more speedy.

"By the way, Turner, are you personally interested in this matter?" asked the lawyer.

"Yes," said the squire. "The claimant is a friend of mine, and I have advanced money on it, considering it a fair security. If she loses, I also become a loser."

This was not true, except indirectly, for, as the reader knows, Squire Turner could only lose by being obliged to forego his purpose of marriage.

"You have — excuse my inquiring — authority to act in the matter?"

"Yes; I will exhibit it."

The squire drew out the document to which he had obtained Mrs. Raymond's signature, as described in the preceding chapter. Mr. Robinson glanced at it.

"Quite correct," he said. "Well, then, what shall we decide?"

"Stand out for ten thousand dollars," said the squire. "I don't mind a few months' delay. In fact, for some reasons, the delay will be satisfactory to me."

"If such are your views, we shall probably gain our point," said Mr. Robinson. "It will take some time to bring up the parties to the point, but in six months I think it can be effected, if we stand firm. Will six months be too long?"

"Not at all. We will stand firm."

The conversation now touched upon matters of detail, on which we need not enter. It is enough to say that Mr. Robinson and his client agreed upon the policy advisable to be pursued, and the former agreed to keep the latter constantly apprised of the progress of the negotiation.

I must stop here to explain why it was that Squire Turner was in no hurry to bring the matter to a con-

clusion. Nine months only had passed since Mr. Raymond's death, and an offer of marriage on his part to Mrs. Raymond would, he felt, be considered premature, and be very probably declined. Now, if the matter were settled at once in favor of Mrs. Raymond, she was liable at any time to be made aware of it in some unforeseen way, and, if thus made pecuniarily independent, the squire felt that she would prefer not to contract a second marriage. He counted upon obtaining her consent for the sake of her child, whom he could support in comfort and afford more advantages, which otherwise the mother would be quite unable to provide. It therefore suited his purposes better that the matter should be protracted for, say six months, when a sufficient time would have elapsed, since Mr. Raymond's death, to make his proposal proper.

Squire Turner returned from his western trip, and, of course, took an early opportunity to call on Mrs. Raymond.

"Did you have a pleasant journey?" asked the widow.

"Very. By the way, I stopped at Milwaukie on my return."

"Did you hear anything of the warrant?"

"Yes; I find there is a chance of realizing seventy-five or a hundred dollars from it. It is not much, to be sure—"

"It will be a good deal to me. You are certainly very kind, Squire Turner. You must deduct any expenses which you have incurred about it."

"I couldn't think of it, Mrs. Raymond," said the squire, in a cordial manner. "It is a pleasure to me to serve my friends."

"How much I have misjudged Squire Turner in times past!" thought Mrs. Raymond, and she thanked him again.

Two months later Squire Turner received a letter from the Milwaukie lawyer, in which he stated that the parties had increased their offer to seven thousand dollars.

"Shall I accept it for you?" he asked.

Squire Turner replied that the offer was not satisfactory, and that the negotiation must proceed. He was in no particular hurry, he said.

A month later the offer was increased to eight thousand dollars.

"Tell them," he wrote, "that we will take a month to consider their offer. I am not in haste, as I before wrote, and am resolved not to accept any sum short of ten thousand dollars. Still it won't do any harm to appear to consider their offer."

So negotiations continued until the six months had nearly passed. It seemed pretty clear now that Squire Turner's ultimatum would shortly be accepted, nine thousand dollars having been already offered. Mr. Robinson advised his client to come out to Milwaukie, feeling confident that, if he were personally present, the matter could be satisfactorily arranged on his own terms. To this the squire was not averse; but first he wished to see what were his chances of success with the widow.

Accordingly, he dressed himself with more than usual care, one evening, and walked round to the house of Mrs. Raymond. He had become such a frequent visitor there, of late, that his visits never excited surprise.

He was received with the usual welcome. Mrs.

Raymond ushered him into the sitting-room, where she had been sitting with little Katy. Katy was reading a book which she had taken from the Sunday-school library. Squire Turner looked at her and hesitated, for he did not care to have the little girl present when he made his proposal.

"Have you heard anything from Milwaukie, Squire Turner?" asked the widow.

"Not very recently. I don't doubt, however, that matters will turn out favorably. In fact, I am so confident, that I am quite willing to advance you fifty dollars on the warrant."

"Thank you, Squire Turner; but just at present I have a little money on hand. I am glad you think I shall get it."

"I feel sure of it."

There was a moment's pause, and then he proceeded: "There is a matter about which I would like to speak to you alone, Mrs. Raymond, if you would be willing to send Katy out of the room for a few minutes."

"Certainly. Katy, you may go upstairs for a little while."

Katy left the room, and Squire Turner found himself alone with the widow. He drew his chair a little nearer and commenced: —

"I am about to make you a proposal, Mrs. Raymond, which I think will be mutually advantageous, and I hope you will regard it in that light. I have had it in view for some time, but felt delicate about introducing the subject before. I hope you regard me as a friend."

"Indeed, you have been a true friend to me, Squire Turner."

"I have tried to be," said the squire, modestly. "But I will not waste time, but at once make my proposal. You have lost your husband, I my wife. I need some one to superintend my house, and look after my son, while you need a protector who is able to give you a good home. Will you be my wife?"

"Indeed, Squire Turner," said Mrs. Raymond, startled, "I never anticipated that your proposal would be of such a character."

"And yet, why should you be surprised? Need I recall that time, years since, when we were both younger, and I made the same offer? You see my

attachment is no new thing. You preferred another, but he has been taken from you."

"I thank you very much for your kind offer," said Mrs. Raymond, "but I have never thought of marrying again since my husband's death. I do not think it would be right."

"Such marriages take place continually."

"I know they do; but all do not feel as I do."

"I think your late husband would favor it. Think of your dependent condition. You have hard work to earn a poor living, and when the four hundred dollars which remain to you are gone, you will indeed be in a different position."

"That is true."

"Consider, on the other hand, that I could give you a good home at once, and relieve you from all pecuniary anxiety. Your little Katy needs better advantages than you can give her. She seems to have a taste for music. I should have her at once commence lessons on the piano, and would take care that she should receive as good an education as money

could procure. For her sake, Mrs. Raymond, I hope you will reconsider your decision."

Mrs. Raymond had often lamented her inability to have Katy properly educated, and the squire could have used no argument more potent.

"If I thought it would be right," said the widow, hesitatingly.

"Think what a difference it will make in Katy half a dozen years hence. Of course, if I am personally disagreeable to you —"

"No, no, my kind friend; do not think that," said Mrs. Raymond, hastily. "But I do not know what to say. The proposal is so new and unexpected that I cannot make up my mind at once what it is right for me to do."

"I will not ask you to decide at once. Take three days for it, and if you have any friend whom you trust, ask that friend's advice. Will you do so?"

"Yes," said the widow, "I will do as you advise. I will think over your proposal, and I will try to decide in three days' time."

"Then I will call on Tuesday to receive your decision. Let me hope it will be favorable."

Squire Turner left the cottage in a satisfied frame of mind. He felt sure that for Katy's sake Mrs. Raymond would accept him.

CHAPTER XXXV.

IN WHICH TWO STRANGERS PUT IN AN APPEARANCE.

MRS. RAYMOND consulted with a friend, according to Squire Turner's suggestion, and was advised by all means to accept.

"It will be such an advantage for Katy, you know," her friend said.

"But I don't feel as if it would be quite right. I don't love Squire Turner."

"You don't need to. People don't often marry a second time for love. That will do very well for a young girl; but there are other things to be thought of now."

"Then you advise me to marry again?"

"I do, most certainly."

"If Harry were at home I would not do it," said the widow. "I don't think he would like it. As it is, it is only for Katy's sake that I give my consent."

So when Squire Turner called for his answer he found it to be favorable. He urged immediate marriage. For this he had his reasons, as he desired to be in a situation to complete his western negotiation.

"There is no use in delaying," he said. "The sooner Katy commences her musical education the better. Besides, I am lonely, and my household sadly needs a woman to look after it."

Mrs. Raymond would have preferred to postpone the marriage for six months; but she could assign no reasons for it, and so at length yielded to the squire's request, and that day four weeks was appointed for the wedding. The next day Squire Turner went to the city, and selected a handsome silk dress-pattern, which was forwarded by express to Mrs. Raymond, with an intimation that it was for her wedding-dress. She could not do otherwise than accept it, and the village dress-maker was sent for at once to superintend its making up.

Time slipped by, and the day for the marriage had nearly arrived. The wedding-dress was completed, and various other articles, which had also been sent

through the squire's liberality, lay upon the bed in Mrs. Raymond's chamber.

"What a beautiful dress, mother!" said Katy. "I wish you would try it on."

More to please the little girl than herself, Mrs. Raymond consented and tried on the new dress. She was still a fine-looking woman, as I have already said, and the new dress became her well. Little Katy looked at her in admiration, and said, "How beautiful you look, mother! I wish Harry were here to see you."

At the sound of Harry's name Mrs. Raymond's face changed. She could not conceal from herself that what she was about to do would have been strongly opposed by Harry, had he been at home. Would he ever come home? That was the question which occurred to her, and, if he did, what would he say to find her Squire Turner's wife?

"I wish I could put it off for six months," she thought.

They were in a room on the second floor, and there was no one in the lower part of the house. Just then the front door was heard to open.

"Go downstairs, Katy," said Mrs. Raymond. "Somebody has come in. See who it is, and come and tell me."

Katy went down, and directly Mrs. Raymond heard a loud exclamation. She could not exactly make it out, but it sounded like "Harry!" A wild hope sprang up in her heart. Without thinking of her bridal dress she hurried downstairs. She was not deceived. There stood Harry, her Harry, taller and manlier than when she saw him last, but with the same frank, handsome face, holding his little sister in his arms.

"Harry!" exclaimed Mrs. Raymond, in joyful surprise; and in a moment the long-separated son and mother embraced.

"God be thanked for your return, my dear son!" she said. "Where have you been all this long time?"

"It will take a long time to tell, mother. I have just returned from Australia."

"From Australia!" exclaimed Mrs. Raymond, in amazement.

"Yes, mother, it's a long story. I will tell it by

and by. But how well you are looking! And (for the first time noticing his mother's elegant dress) how handsomely you are dressed! Have you come into a fortune since I went away?"

"No, Harry," said Mrs. Raymond, confused.

"I expected to find you in poverty, perhaps in want," said Harry, puzzled more and more. "I didn't think to see you dressed like a queen."

"It's mother's wedding-dress, Harry," said little Katy, who did not share her mother's embarrassment.

"Your wedding-dress, mother!" exclaimed Harry, his face clouding. "Who are you going to marry?"

"I did it for the best, Harry," said his mother, uneasily; "and he has been very kind."

"Who is he, mother?"

"Squire Turner. He—"

"Squire Turner!" exclaimed Harry, vehemently, springing to his feet; "it is not possible you are thinking of marrying him. He is the worst enemy we have."

"No, Harry," said his mother; "you are mistaken there. You must, at least, do him justice. He has been very kind, very kind, indeed. I don't know

how I should have got along, in the sad days after we lost you, but for his kindness."

"So you think he has been kind, mother?" said Harry, with a peculiar expression.

"Very kind, as Katy can tell you," said Mrs. Raymond. "Not that this is reason enough to marry him. But it is for Katy's sake I am going to do it. Squire Turner has promised to give her every advantage, and she will begin to take music-lessons as soon as we are married. I have had very hard work getting along, Harry, and it was a relief to feel that I need have no more anxiety about making a living."

"Then you don't love him, mother?"

"I shall never love any one again, Harry. My love was buried in your father's grave."

"I am glad of that, at any rate; glad that you don't love this scoundrel—"

"Harry, Harry, don't talk so, I beg of you."

"Mother, I have good reason for all I say. I know Squire Turner better than you."

"How can you know him so well, when you have been away for more than a year?"

"Have you any idea why I went away so sud-

denly? I don't mean to New York; but how it happened that I disappeared from New York?"

"No, Harry, I know nothing of it."

"Then I will tell you. Squire Turner, whom you think so kind, had me kidnapped on board a vessel bound for China, and I started on my long voyage without any chance of letting you know what had become of me."

"This is a strange story, Harry. Are you sure of it?"

"Yes. I have proof of it. I did not suspect at first that Squire Turner had anything to do with the matter, till one day, in the cabin, I picked up a letter directed to Captain Brandon by Squire Turner, which made it all clear."

"But what interest could Squire Turner have in getting you out of the country?" asked Mrs. Raymond.

"I think I know of a reason, mother," said Harry; "but I don't care to mention it now."

"You said the vessel was bound for China. How, then, did you get to Australia?"

"I was thrown into the sea," said Harry; "and,

after floating about for many hours, was picked up at length by a vessel bound for Australia."

"You have, indeed, encountered great perils, my dear son," said his mother, shuddering. "Thank God, you escaped them all, and are once more restored to us."

Harry was about to question his mother more particularly respecting her trials during his absence, when a knock was heard at the door.

"I will open it, mother," said Harry.

Opening the front door he saw on the step a well-dressed gentleman, whom he did not recognize.

"Does Mrs. Raymond live here?" asked the stranger.

"Yes, sir. Would you like to see her?"

"I should like to do so. I am managing some business for her."

Here he offered his card, which bore the name: —

"FRANCIS ROBINSON,

"*Attorney at Law*,

"MILWAUKIE."

"Won't you walk in, sir?" said Harry, considerably surprised.

"This is my mother," he said, introducing the lawyer. "Mother, this is Mr. Robinson, of Milwaukie, who says he is attending to some business there for you."

"Will you be seated, sir?" said Mrs. Raymond. "I had not heard your name, but I suppose it's about the land warrant."

"Yes, madam. I am glad to say that we have succeeded. I happened to be called East on business, and thought I would call in person, and communicate the favorable termination of our negotiation. I went first to the house of Squire Turner; but, learning that he is out of town for a day or two, inquired you out, and have great pleasure in being the first to impart the good news to you."

"May I inquire," said Harry, "how much my mother is likely to realize for the land warrant?"

"The other party have agreed to your terms. They will compromise without an appeal to law, agreeing to pay ten thousand dollars."

"Ten thousand dollars!" repeated Mrs. Raymond, in bewilderment. "Surely there is some mistake.

Squire Turner told me I might realize from seventy-five to a hundred dollars from it."

"Seventy-five to a hundred dollars!" he repeated. "Are you sure you understood Squire Turner aright?"

"Certainly. He told me only a fortnight since that he thought I would obtain this sum, and I felt lucky to get anything at all."

"There is a great mistake somewhere," said the lawyer, significantly. "Of one thing, however, I can assure you, — that the ten thousand dollars will actually be paid."

"Mother," said Harry, "have you given Squire Turner authority to act for you in this matter?"

"I have, — that is, I signed a paper which he said gave him such authority."

"He showed me that paper," said Mr. Robinson.

"Can my mother revoke that authority?" asked Harry.

"Undoubtedly."

"Then she does revoke it at once, — am I not right, mother?"

"If you think best, Harry."

"I do think best. It is evident that Squire Turner has not been faithful to your interests. If you wish, I will act as your agent."

"But you are so young, Harry."

"I have seen something of the world, mother, since I left home. I shall not hesitate to take charge of the business. Mr. Robinson will assist me."

"Certainly. I shall be happy to do whatever I can."

"Then, Mr. Robinson, if it would not be too much trouble, and you can spare the time, will you give me a history of the case, and explain how matters at present stand?"

"I see," said the lawyer, smiling, "that you know how to come to the point. I will endeavor to imitate you."

He made a brief and comprehensive statement, which Harry readily understood.

"Have you the warrant, Mr. Robinson?" asked our hero.

"Yes; it was committed to me by Squire Turner."

"That is all right. I was afraid he had it in his possession, and that might give us trouble."

"No; it is out of his power to affect the arrangements already made."

"How long shall you remain East, Mr. Robinson?" asked Harry. "I shall wish to see you again."

"I shall remain in New York a week, my headquarters being at the Astor House."

"I will call upon you there. Meanwhile, we leave this matter entirely in your hands."

Mr. Robinson was about to go, when little Katy, who had been looking out of the window, suddenly exclaimed: —

"Mother, I see Squire Turner coming up the road. I think he is coming here."

All present looked at each other in momentary doubt as to what was best to be done. Harry was the first to grasp the situation.

"Mr. Robinson," he said, "will you be kind enough to accompany me to another room, and wait? I would like your presence by and by. Mother, while you are upstairs and changing your dress, Katy will admit Squire Turner, and tell him you will be down directly. Mind, Katy, not a word about my having got home, or about Mr. Robinson's being

here. When you come down, mother, you must tell Squire Turner that you have changed your mind about marrying him, and, if he makes any objection, call me in."

"I see you are a master of strategy, my young friend," said Mr. Robinson, smiling. "I place myself unhesitatingly in your hands."

Harry's programme was instantly carried out, and one minute later Squire Turner knocked at the door of the cottage.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONCLUSION.

"Is your mother at home, Katy?" asked Squire Turner, as the child opened the outer door.

"Yes, sir," said Katy. "She's upstairs."

"Will you tell her I wish to see her?"

"Yes, sir."

Squire Turner walked in, and took a seat without ceremony, as was natural, considering that it was the house of his future wife. Katy went upstairs, and presently Mrs. Raymond, who had changed her dress, came down.

"I thought you were out of town," she said, trying to speak in her usual manner, but succeeding with difficulty, for she could not help thinking of the squire's agency in driving Harry from home.

"I returned sooner than I anticipated. By the way, I think I have found a tenant for this cottage."

"I don't think that will be necessary, Squire Tur-

ner. I shall probably continue to occupy it myself."

"How can that be?" demanded the squire, surprised. "As my wife, you will, of course, live in my house."

"I shall not become your wife. I have changed my mind."

"What does this mean?" he demanded, angrily. "Why do you trifle with me thus?"

"I am afraid, Squire Turner, you have not been so much my friend as I supposed."

"In what respect have I failed to act as your friend?"

"O Squire Turner!" exclaimed the widow, impulsively, "how could you contrive such a wicked plot against my poor boy? How could you send him to sea, and not tell me, when you saw I was breaking my heart at his absence?"

The squire flushed at this unexpected accusation. How in the world, he thought, could Mrs. Raymond have heard of his agency in the abduction of Harry?

"I don't know what you mean," he said; but his face belied his words.

"It was wicked," said Mrs. Raymond, "to endanger his life and rob me of happiness!"

"Who makes this absurd charge against me?" demanded the squire.

The door opened, and Harry entered.

"Squire Turner," he said, "I don't suppose you are very glad to see me. Probably you did not expect me home so soon; perhaps not at all."

"Where did you come from?" stammered the squire.

"From Australia."

"From Australia — I thought —"

"Yes, you thought I was bound to China," said Harry, coolly. "But I left the Sea Eagle, not liking Captain Hartley Brandon very much, and went to Australia instead."

This was a surprise to the squire, who answered, doggedly, however, "You seem to be laboring under a strange mistake, Harry. What possible motive could I have for sending you away?"

"I can think of one," said Harry, significantly; "but perhaps you would not like to have me mention it."

Again the squire's face flushed, for he comprehended the allusion very well. He turned to Mrs. Raymond.

"Am I to understand, Mrs. Raymond," he said, "that you break your engagement to me?"

"I should hardly expect to marry you now, after all that has happened."

"Then," said the squire, angrily, "I may as well go; but, before going," he added, with a sneer, "I congratulate you on securing a new dress at my expense."

"How is this, mother?" asked Harry.

"Squire Turner gave me my wedding outfit," said the widow, embarrassed.

"Don't let that trouble you, mother," said Harry. "Squire Turner, if you will let me know the expense which you have incurred, I shall have pleasure in paying the bill."

"I think you will have a little difficulty in paying a hundred and twenty dollars," sneered the squire.

In reply, Harry drew out his pocket-book and took therefrom a hundred-dollar bill and a twenty, and laid them on the table.

"I think you will find that correct," he said.

"Where did you get all this money?" the squire asked, in astonishment.

"My voyage turned out better than you anticipated," said Harry. "If you still hold a mortgage on this house, I will take it up whenever you desire."

It is hard to say whether Squire Turner was more pleased at getting back his money, or disappointed at the intelligence of Harry's good fortune; but, on the whole, it is safe to say that the latter feeling predominated.

He took the bills, and again took his hat to go, when he was stopped by Harry.

"If you will stay five minutes longer," he said, "I should like to ask you one or two questions. My mother tells me that you have been trying to obtain money for the land warrant I placed in your hands"

"Yes," said the squire.

"May I ask what success you have met with?"

"Probably she will realize a hundred dollars from it."

"On the whole, Squire Turner, we will not trouble

you to do anything more about it. I think I can do better than that."

"I have your mother's authority to act as her agent. You are a boy, and not competent to manage it."

"My mother recalls her authority."

"Is this true?" demanded the squire, hotly.

"Yes," said the widow. "Now that Harry is at home, I think he can attend to it."

"Then you won't realize a cent," snapped the squire. "But you can't blame me. I have been doing my best for you, and that is all the thanks I get. I shall now charge you with the expenses I have incurred in the matter, though I did not intend to do so."

"If the bill is a fair one it shall be paid," said Harry.

He went to the door and called "Mr. Robinson!" That gentleman entered. Squire Turner looked at him as if he could not believe the testimony of his eyes.

"Mr. Robinson!" he ejaculated.

"Yes," said the lawyer; "I was called East, unex-

HARRY SURPRISES THE SQUIRE.

pectedly, and thought I would make a call on you to report progress. Not finding you at home, I inquired out Mrs. Raymond, who, by the way, I found had an entirely erroneous idea of the value of the warrant. You will be glad to know that I have succeeded in obtaining an offer of ten thousand dollars, which will be paid over within a month."

This last blow was too much for Squire Turner. Foiled at all points, he dashed his hat angrily upon his head, and rushed from the house in undignified haste. In this connection, it may be added that Harry, finding he had collected the two thousand dollars from the insurance company, forced him to return it. Squire Turner saved his reputation by stating that the man who set the house on fire had voluntarily come forward and paid the money, which enabled him to return the sum collected of the company. For this act Squire Turner was made the subject of a complimentary paragraph in the county paper; but it is doubtful if he enjoyed reading it much.

Great was Mrs. Raymond's joy over the lucky turn in her affairs. Between nine and ten thousand dollars were paid her as the proceeds of the land war-

rant, and this made her quite comfortable. When it was ascertained that Harry had brought a still larger sum from Australia, he became quite a great man in Vernon, and, if he had not been so young, I verily believe he would have been elected to some responsible town office.

But it was not Harry's intention to live in Vernon. He wanted a larger field for his efforts. The next summer he made a visit to England, and was cordially received by Mr. Lindsay, who wished him to remain; but Harry was unwilling to be separated from his mother. Mr. Lindsay then proposed to Harry on his return to enter a counting-room in New York, to learn business, with a view of establishing a branch of his own house in that city, at a later day, to be under Harry's charge. This proposal was accepted by our hero, who felt that it would be advantageous to him. He removed his mother and sister to New York, as they were unwilling to be separated from him.

It is enough to say that in business Harry exhibited the same qualities which we have already seen in him, and that his mastery of the details was sur-

prisingly rapid. As I write, Harry, who is now twenty-one, is about to undertake the charge of the New York branch of Lindsay & Co., which will give him a commanding business position. There are rumors that Maud, whose early preference for him still continues, will, before very long, become the wife of her father's young American representative, and I am inclined to think the report is a true one.

My readers may like to hear how James Turner made out in life. A year since he obtained the situation of teller in a bank, his father standing surety for him. He soon developed expensive tastes, and finally disappeared, carrying away thirty thousand dollars of the funds of the bank. This loss his father has had to make good, and, in consequence, he has become a comparatively poor man, and a very sour, morose man at that. He was compelled to give up his imposing house, and he now lives in the humble cottage formerly occupied by Mrs. Raymond. So the wheel of fortune has turned, and those who were once at the top are now at the bottom. But, for Harry and his mother, we hope many years of happi-

ness are in store. But, if ever reverses should come, we are sure that Harry, keeping in mind his old motto, "SINK OR SWIM," would bear up bravely, and turn defeat into victory.

The next volume of this series will be

STRONG AND STEADY;

OR,

PADDLE YOUR OWN CANOE.